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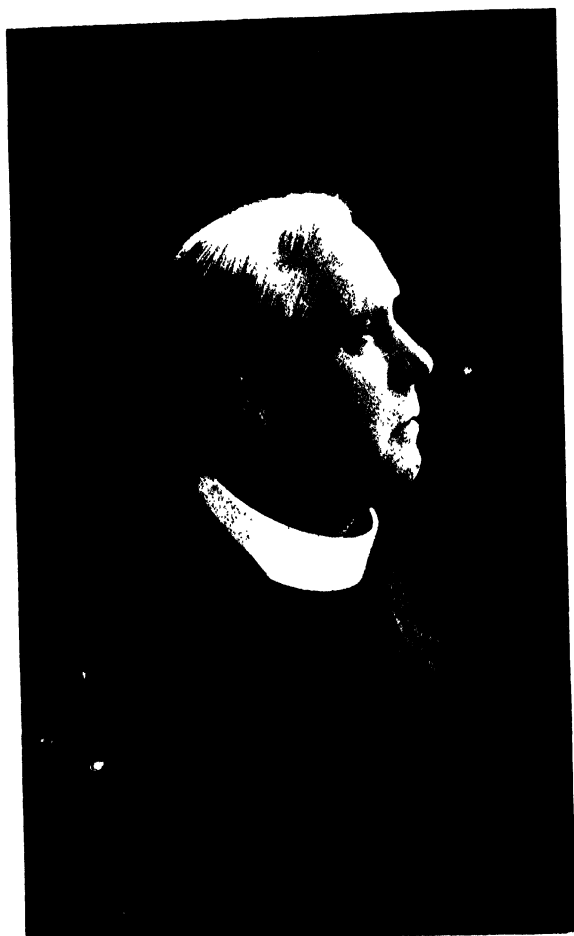
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ATTIC SALT

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Most faithfully yours
J. Schaeffer

ATTIC SALT

THE SAVING GRACE OF HUMOUR

BY

T. SELBY HENREY

VICAR, OF ST. GEORGE, BRENTFORD, W.

AUTHOR OF "NOBILITY OF MAN" "ST. BOTOLPH, ALDERSGATE" ETC.

"A MERRY heart doeth good like a medicine."

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

SECOND IMPRESSION

London

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TO
MY DEAR SON
ROBERT SELBY HENREY
THE SUNBEAM OF HIS HOME
I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE THIS VOLUME
MAY HE EVER BE A SUNNY CHRISTIAN
AND MAY HIS SPEECH ALWAYS BE SEASONED WITH
ATTIC SALT

Menenius.

. . . I shall tell you

A pretty tale : it may be you have heard it ;

But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To stale't a little more.

First Citizen. Well, I'll hear it.

Coriolanus, i. 1.

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A LEGEND tells us how one day when St. John was playing with a tame partridge, an Ephesian hunter, with bow unbent, chanced to come that way, and expressed surprise at the Apostle's playful mood, whereupon St. John asked him why he carried his bow unstrung. The hunter replied that it was in order that it might not lose its elasticity. On which St. John said, Thus it is with man : his mind cannot always be strung. It also requires moments of relaxation ; prolonged tension would impair man's usefulness.

PROLOGUE.

MY introductory word must be explanatory of the Title chosen for this book. Attic Salt or Wit has to do with wit from the upper story only in so far as these pages show us great minds at play. The explanation which the dictionary gives of Attic Wit is a pure, delicate, classical wit clothed with elegant expression peculiar to the cultured Athenians. Salt, both in Greek and Latin, was a common word for wit, thus Cicero writes: "Scipio omnes sale superabat." Martial (born, A.D. 43) "You imagine, Calliodorus, that your jesting is witty, and that you, above all others, overflow with an abundance of Attic Salt. You smile at all, you utter pleasantries upon all, and you think that by so doing you will please at the dinner table." ¹

• The history of humour is a most fascinating study, as it brings the investigator into touch with the greatest minds of every age. But though humour is constantly to be met with in ancient and modern literature, it takes a different form in almost every century; so that the kind of wit which appeals to the

¹ Book vi. Ep. 44.

sense of humour of one period may fall flat on the ears of a succeeding generation. You may frequently judge the public opinion of an age by its standard of wit.

To go into the history of humour with any degree of thoroughness would require more space than can here be devoted to it; nevertheless even a cursory glance at the subject may not be devoid of interest.

In the *Spectator* of 10th May 1711, it is stated that Aristotle (chap. xi. in rhetoric) describes several kinds of puns which he calls *paragrams*, among the beauties of good writing; and he produces instances of the same out of the greatest Greek authors. Cicero has sprinkled several of his works with puns; and in his book, in which he lays down the rules of oratory, quotes an abundance of sayings as specimens of wit.

The following extracts from letters which I have received from two of the greatest classical scholars of our day will doubtless be read with interest:—

(1) “Good stories and *bon-mots* were treasured up by the ancients, though they seem to us now for the most part of a very poor kind. *Apuleius*, where you will find most of them, is not a very readable book.”

(2) “What is called ‘the Anecdotic Tradition’ is extremely strong and flourishing in later Greek literature. Typical cases of it are Plutarch’s various books of Ἀποφθίγματα βασιλέων καὶ στρατηγῶν, Ἀποφθίγματα Λακωνικά, Λακωνῶν ἀποφθίγματα, and the like. But you find the influence of the anecdote running all

through Plutarch's writings, also Aulus Gellius, and all the biographies; in fact, one of the greatest difficulties in reconstructing the life of any ancient Greek is that facts are overgrown and smothered by the Anecdotic Tradition. It takes two forms among others. (A) 'Good stories' about the person. (B) Sayings, ἀποφθέγματα, of the person."

Hazlitt, in a preface to one of his charming books, writes: "The Sixty Club at Athens, in the time of Demosthenes, may, no doubt, be accepted as the earliest institution of its kind. The names of some of the members have come down, with an anecdote how Philip of Macedon sent the Club a handsome present, regretting his inability to attend its meetings, but asking for a collection of all the good sayings which the Sixty had ever delivered. Whether this appeal met with the response which the king's bounty merited no one appears to depose; but, had it been otherwise, the jest-book of the Athenian Sexagint would have been *facile princeps*. The labours of Lucian and Athenaeus in the field of wit were incidental and fragmentary."

Let me turn from classical to biblical literature. James Neil, M.A., the great writer and lecturer on Palestine, informs me that "The pun or paronomasia . . . which turns on the use of words with similar sounds but spelt differently, abounds in the Hebrew of the Old and the Greek of the New Testament; though it is almost always lost in our translation." "St. Paul," the same scholar tells me, "when condemning a woman prophesying, *i.e.* preaching in public, says 'let her be shaven,' as is the case with men in the

East; but if she is ashamed of this 'let her be veiled' (1 Cor. xi. 5, 6). The veil of the East is a large white sheet, which would be a complete extinguisher. The fun of this is obvious. St. Paul's fine ironies, often approaching sarcasm, in his courteous and marvellously expressed second letter to the Corinthians, especially in the four concluding chapters, are full of delicate humour, which must have amused as well as edified the faithful, and confounded the adversaries at Corinth.

"How critics can say the great apostle of the Gentiles lacked all sense of humour, has always been a matter of amazement to me. St. Paul often employs humour in a masterly manner, such as his 'idle tatlers and busy-bodies' (1 Tim. v. 13), people at the same time idle as to all that is good, and industrious about all that is evil. 'Hands hanging for want of work, but tongues always wagging with gossip, active in meddling and mischief.' Again, of those preferring fables to facts, he says: 'Having itching ears they heap to themselves teachers'; a truly amusing metaphor, which pictures them as swine suffering from scurvy, seeking for relief from the itching in their ears by scratching them against store heaps! (2 Tim. iv. 3)."

Regarding our own English humour, Hazlitt has unearthed many of the books from which Shakespeare more or less borrowed.

The *Hundred Merry Tales*, he says, is essentially English, and is about the earliest collection of witty words previous to the time of Henry VIII. In that monarch's reign a physician of the name of Borde

published a book of wit which he called *Gothamite Tales*. The following is an example of its contents :—

“There was a man of Gotham did ride to market with two bushels of wheat, and because his horse should not bear heavy, he carried his corn upon his own neck, and did ride upon his horse, because his horse should not carry so heavy a burden. Judge you, which was the wisest, his horse or himself?”

Doctor Joyce, the well-known writer on Irish wit, says in a letter addressed to me : “The Irish had their own share of wit and humour in old times.” You will find a great many of our ‘good stories’ in my books entitled *English as we Speak it in Ireland* and *The Wonders of Ireland*.”

Addison, writing about 1711, says : “The age in which the pun chiefly flourished was the reign of King James the First. That Monarch was himself a punster, and made very few bishops or privy-councillors that had not some time or other signalled themselves by a clinch or a conundrum. The sermons of Bishop Andrews and the tragedies of Shakespeare are full of them.”

The ancient wood-carvings, gargoyles and rebuses of our cathedrals and churches, give a good idea of one form which humour took during the medieval age.

Personally I have loved good stories since I was a boy. The earliest in my own collection date from the time when I was at St. Edward’s, Oxford, when I had

to translate from Greek into my mother-tongue the jokes of Hierocles. The following two then pleased me most :—

“A scholar going to bathe for the first time sank under water, and was like to have drowned. Scared at the fate he had but just escaped, he promised he would never again go into the water until he had learnt to swim.”

“A fool, who was desirous of selling his house, took a stone out of the wall, and carried it to the market for a sample.”

When I was in my teens my father, who was a rector, and a man who could enjoy humour, said to me, emphasising his remark with a hearty laugh : “Ah, what a *boy* you are !” Though that is now thirty-five years ago, I well remember the words, seeing they were the last he ever spoke to me on earth ; and I am not ashamed of having been so called, and even pray that I may retain the boy-heart until I hear my father’s voice again.

It has been my rule through life whenever I have heard a good story, to jot it down from memory, and to copy out any that have struck me in my reading. The present little collection is the outcome of this habit. In such a collection there cannot, of course, be much originality. When humorous sayings are included without acknowledgment, it is because I do not know the source from which they come ; my first aim has been to give credit where credit is due. Should any apology be needed for publishing these anecdotes, I can

only say that having, during the leisure moments of a busy life, found recreation in hearing or telling a "good story," I now desire to pass on in a more permanent form, that which has given me pleasure.

Though this book is the product of many happy hours, there is a sense in which I feel I can say with Michel Montaigne (1533): "You will find here a nosegay of flowers, to which I have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them."

I beg to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following authors and publishers who have most generously granted me permission to quote extracts:—

Nuts and Chestnuts, by Hon. L. A. TOLLEMACHE (Messrs. Edward Arnold). *Old and Odd Memories*, by Hon. L. A. TOLLEMACHE (Messrs. Edward Arnold). *Some Recollections*, by Canon TEIGNMOUTH SHORE (Messrs. Hutchinson & Co.). *Collections and Recollections* (Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.). *Dulce Domum*, by Miss C. A. E. MOBERLY (Messrs. John Murray & Co.). *Bishop Samuel Wilberforce*, by Archdeacon DANIELL (Messrs. Methuen & Co.). *Pre-Tractarian Oxford*, by Rev. W. TUCKWELL (Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.). *Reminiscences of Oxford*, by Rev. W. TUCKWELL (Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.). *Life and Letters of Bishop Mandell Creighton* (Messrs. Longman & Co.). *Life of Dean Lefroy*, by H. LEES (Messrs. H. J. Vince & Co.). *Letters of William Stubbs of Oxford*, by Archdeacon HUTTON (Messrs. A. Constable & Co.). *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, by Dean BURGON (John Murray).

May I Tell you a Story, by HELEN MAR. *Musicians' Wit and Humour*, by F. J. CROWEST (The Walter Scott Publishing Company). *The Strand Magazine* (The Editor). *The Times* (The Editor). *Memories of Archbishop Temple* (Messrs. Macmillan & Co.).

CHAPTER I

GREAT CHURCHMEN

DARWIN, towards the close of his life, was wont to say that he had devoted so many years to scientific study, at the expense of every other branch of knowledge, that his mind had got into a rut, and his perception had become blunted to the loveliness of art, the enjoyment of music, and the beauties of poetry. In the same way the numerous activities of modern life are apt to crowd out the lighter forms of intellectual enjoyment, useful as these doubtless are for recuperating the tired minds of workers. When King Solomon was building the Temple at Jerusalem, we are told that he sent his craftsmen to the mountains of Lebanon to seek change of scene and rest of mind. If relaxation was good for toilers in the days of wise King Solomon, it cannot be bad for us who live in the most strenuous times. We believe that "labour brings pleasure, idleness pain"; yet God did not plant the love of humour in man by accident. The Creator knows as well as His creature that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

"Jog on, jog on, the footpath away,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the way,
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

No less an authority than the Bishop of London, when speaking to his church-workers, and quoting St. Paul's words, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt," reminded his hearers that the words "seasoned with salt," had been taken by some commentators to mean "saving humour."

Not a few people associate with the long black coat and clerical collar only that nature which is most foreign to a humorous story or sparkling wit. Yet the very opposite is frequently the case. Scholars and preachers have frequently stood out as men endowed with a large share of humour in addition to the ability to see life's most serious side.

Even the learned commentator, Dean Alford, did not consider the following lines unworthy of his pen:—

"I'm glad I'm not a Bishop,
To walk in long black gaiters,
And have my conduct pulled about
By democrat dictators."

Words that have found an echo in a story which Dr. Gore, Bishop of Oxford, told in a public meeting at his own expense:—

"In Birmingham I once overheard two street arabs discussing my appearance, and at last one said to the other, "I tell you what, Bill, he is a Highlander what's caught cold in his legs."

Bishop Creighton of London
(1896-1901).

The first two stories are from the life of Bishop Creighton.

GREAT CHURCHMEN

A friend met the bishop once at the door of Fulham Palace showing out a deputation of discontented parishioners, and as he turned back with him, the bishop replied to the question how he was, "As well as can be expected when everyone in the diocese thinks that he has a right to come and bray in my study."¹

Once after a somewhat trenchant remark of his, someone said: "Ah, bishop, I am afraid you don't suffer fools gladly." "No, no!" answered the bishop rather grandly, and then added, with a sudden smile, "But I *do* suffer them."¹

Bishop Creighton interviewed a London vicar at St. Paul's Cathedral, and requested that he would abandon the use of incense, to which the vicar attached most vital importance. "You see, my lord, I have the cure of 10,000 souls to minister to." "Quite so," rejoined the bishop, "but you don't wish to cure them with smoke like so many kippers."

A second-rate author, on sending Dr. Creighton his latest work, received by return of post the reply, "I thank you very much for forwarding to me your book, and I promise you faithfully that I will not lose any time in reading it."

During the after-dinner speeches at a banquet, given by the then Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Temple) at Lambeth Palace, it devolved upon Bishop Creighton of London to propose the health of the host. The

¹ *Life and Letters of Bishop Mandell Creighton.*

learned prelate described a dream which he had recently had. He had dreamed that he was at the entrance of heaven, and standing at the foot of a wide dazzling marble staircase, the height of which was so great that the top was lost to view. On the lowest step he saw a box of chalk, and inscribed thereon were these words: "Each aspirant on his ascent to the mansions above must take some chalk, and write a sin, committed in the previous world, on each step before mounting it. Then," said the speaker, "in obedience to the request I took some chalk, and after mounting many steps, came to an end of my sins as far as memory served me, when, all of a sudden, I looked up and noticed a dark, rugged figure hurriedly descending, and, as it drew near, I recognised to my great surprise none other than the Archbishop of Canterbury. I exclaimed: 'Your Grace, who would have expected to see you? Have they refused you admission?' On which a gruff, harsh voice ejaculated: 'No, but I have used up all my chalk; coming down for some more.'" The great historian of European fame perhaps never hit off a character so faithfully as he did in this fancy.

**Bishop Harvey Goodwin, Bishop
of Carlisle (1869-1892).**

Bishop Harvey Goodwin was just leaving a rectory one day, when he saw a little daughter of the house eyeing wistfully the case in which his pastoral staff had been packed; he guessed the child's curiosity, stopped, unpacked it, and put it together, and showed

it her, saying, "You see, the point is to push on those of the clergymen in my diocese who don't go fast enough, and the crook is to keep back those who go too fast."

Bishop Harvey Goodwin told the Wolverhampton working men at a Church Congress, that gambling was "a bad and damnable practice, the man who indulged in it was a fool, and if he did not take care, would ultimately become a knave."

Dean Lefroy of Norwich (1889-1909).

I knew Dean Lefroy of Norwich intimately for thirty years. As a host he was ideal, as an after-dinner speaker he had not a rival. On one occasion he convulsed his hearers by saying that he relieved the people of Liverpool, when he was vicar there, of about £100,000, and he was desirous of conferring a similar blessing upon the inhabitants of Norwich. "And," he added, "I am not aware how you would take it, but I know how I should take it, and that is the only point in question."

At a dinner of medical men, he remarked that there is a marvellous moral affinity between the clerical and medical professions. "It is the business of the former to preach, and of the latter to practice."

At a banquet of a Fire Assurance Society, Mr. Herbert Leeds tells us in his *Life of Dean Lefroy*, in replying to a toast, the dean likened the clerical calling to an Insurance Company. "It is your duty," he said, "to

insure people against one kind of fire; it is the duty of the clergy to try and insure them against another kind."

Writing to the *Times* on a matter relating to Convocation, a few weeks before his death, the dean concludes his letter thus: "Mental ophthalmia reminds me of a countryman of mine, who went to a railway station with a view to a journey. He purchased his ticket, placed it in the palm of his hand, smiled broadly, and every glance at the ticket heightened and broadened the smile. A friend observed the merriment of the traveller, and knowing him, asked him the cause of his glee. His answer was, 'I have done the fellow that sold me the ticket.' 'How have you done him?' 'Why,' said he, 'I have got a return ticket, and I am not coming back.'"

But to know the Dean in his happiest mood, one had to be among his circle of friends at the Riffel Alp. His personality in this environment cannot be better described than in a verse composed by Judge Wild, my friend and his—

"Playmate, whose jokes made all the valley ring
With laughter, thou embodiment of fun,
Acknowledged as our Riffel-Alpine King——"

Yet this was the man who moved thousands by his pulpit oratory, in the spirit of Richard Baxter's well-known lines—

"I'll preach as though I ne'er should preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

Archbishop Magee of York;
Bishop of Peterborough (1868-
1891).

Dr. Magee, when Bishop of Peterborough, had been to recruit his health at Worthing. When on the verge of departure he asked for the bill. It was extortionate, but he paid it, and in addition gave the waiter a tip. As he was leaving the hotel, the obsequious landlord came up to him saying: "I hope your lordship has found the rest and change you were in need of." "Indeed, I haven't!" said the eloquent prelate. "The waiter has got the change, you've got the rest, and I have nothing."

It was Archbishop Magee who enunciated that two qualifications were required of the holder of the episcopal office: to suffer fools gladly, and to answer letters by return of post.

Mr. Gladstone, when Premier, happened to meet Bishop Magee one day in Pall Mall. "I hear, my lord, that you don't quite approve of my dealing with the Irish question." "Ah, dear no," answered the Bishop, "it is not your dealing that I mind, Mr. Gladstone, it is your shuffling that I object to." Exeunt in opposite directions.

A millionaire once interviewed the bishop, and in course of conversation said: "You see, my lord, the sum I intend, with your permission, to spend on the church which I desire to erect and endow, is very small, very small—that is—in comparison with my untold wealth. I feel that I shall never miss it, since it is but a drop in the ocean; and, indeed, I have not

long to live . . .” “Stay, my friend!” replied the Bishop, “I know that there are life insurances, but yours is the strangest attempt at insurance against fire that I have ever heard of.”

At a great meeting in St. James’ Hall, held during the summer of 1868, to protest against the disestablishment of the Irish Church, some Roman Catholic enthusiast, in the hope of disturbing the bishop, kept interrupting his eloquence with inopportune shouts of “Speak up, my lord!” “I am already speaking up,” replied the bishop, in his most dulcet tones: “I always speak up; and I decline to speak down to the level of the ill-mannered person in the gallery.”

It was Archbishop Magee who was credited with the well-known saying, when a waiter dropped some hot soup down his neck: “Is there any layman present who will kindly express my feelings?”

Bishop Stubbs of Oxford (1888-1901).

A fussy vicar wrote a long letter to Bishop Stubbs asking his lordship’s opinion as to whether it was requisite to have a faculty in order to place some curtains behind the Holy Table of his church as a reredos. The bishop replied stating his views on the subject. This did not satisfy the cleric, who must needs write another lengthy epistle regarding his proposed reredos. He received a prompt and curt reply:—

“DEAR —,—,—Hang your curtains!—Yours truly,
“W. OXON.”¹

¹ *Life of Bishop Stubbs of Oxford.*

A clergyman applied to him for leave of absence for three months, in order to visit the Holy Land.

"MY DEAR ——,—Go to Jericho.—Yours ever,

"W. OXON."¹

Canon Beeching tells the following story of Bishop Stubbs. It was the morning after a banquet, and a solicitous friend who had sat by the bishop the evening before, happening to meet him in the street, asked whether he got home all right. The bishop looked surprised at the question, but at once added, with an apparent gleam of comprehension, "Oh! thank you, yes, it was only my boots that were tight."

Dean Swift of St. Patrick,
Dublin.

A shoulder of mutton brought up to Dean Swift for dinner was too much done. The dean sent for the cook, and told him to take the joint down and do it less. "Please, your riverence, I cannot do it less." "But," said the dean, "if it had not been done enough, you could have done it more, could you not?" "Oh yes! very easily." "Why, then," said the dean, "for the future, when you commit a fault, let it be such a one as can be mended."

One Michaelmas Day, Dean Swift had ordered a goose for dinner. On taking the cover from off the dish, he noticed that the bird had only one leg, and suspected his old butler of taking the other. "Pat," said he, "how comes it that the goose has only one

¹ *Life of Bishop Stubbs of Oxford.*

leg?" "But, sure, your reverence, geese only have one leg; there is nothing strange in that." "Nonsense!" exclaimed the dean. "But," insisted Pat, "I will prove it the next time we are out driving." Shortly after, in driving past a goose-farm, the servant directed his master's attention to a pond, round which were many geese, each standing on one leg. "There they are with only one leg apiece!" "Ah! But wait," said the dean, clapping his hands, and thus bringing the missing legs from under sheltering wings. "What do you say now, Pat?" "Well, Mr. Dean, why did you not clap your hands and shoo at dinner the other day, and that fellow would no doubt have put down his other leg?"

To show that Dean Swift possessed wisdom, as well as wit, the following well-known saying of his may be instanced: "To acknowledge you were wrong yesterday, is but to let the world know that you are wiser to-day than you were then."

Archbishop Temple of Canterbury (1896-1903); Bishop of London (1885-1896).

Archbishop Temple once asked a candidate for priests' orders to read aloud a chapter from the Bible. "Not loud enough," was the criticism when he had finished. "Oh, I am sorry to hear your grace say so," replied the curate. "A lady in church yesterday told me that I could be heard very distinctly." "Are you engaged?" suddenly asked the prelate. "Yes, your grace." The archbishop smiled grimly and said

"Now, listen to me; while you are engaged, don't believe everything the young lady tells you, but after you are married believe every word she says!"

The following well-known* story of Archbishop Temple when headmaster of Rugby is worth repeating. A boy, who had been unjustly accused of an offence against school rules, wrote home to his father explaining his trouble. In a postscript he added: "I ought to mention that Temple, though a beast, is a just beast."* This letter the father forwarded to Dr. Temple, who used to say that it was the highest compliment that had ever been paid to him.

Not long after Dr. Temple's appointment to the Bishopric of Exeter, he was walking down the principal street of his cathedral city, when he saw the evening newspaper placard, and heard the newsboys shouting: "Astounding statement by the new Bishop of Exeter." The old headmaster of Rugby's curiosity was aroused, and he bought a paper and by the light of a street lamp, read: "The new Bishop of Exeter presided this afternoon at the Annual Meeting of the Church of England Temperance Society, and made the astounding statement that he had never been drunk in his life."

Many of the stories told of Archbishop Temple, when Bishop of London, consist of little more than laconic utterances, the point of which lay in his strong personality and voice. His lordship when speaking was often characterised as "granite on fire," especially when he was dealing with the subject of temperance.

In a solemn part of a service he said to one who was

going through certain genuflections: "Mr. Vicar, don't fidget!"

To another, who informed him that certain ritual was customary at his church, he replied: "Well, it won't be the custom to-day."

To a rector pleading that his residence was but a short distance from his church as the crow flies, he said: "But you are not a crow!" To the incumbent, who had so decorated his church at the north side that Dr. Temple could not take his accustomed position: "Mr. Vicar, take these pots away!" To the talkative young cleric who, driving in the episcopal coach with the bishop and archdeacon, would address himself to the former: "If you must talk, talk to the archdeacon." To the cabby, who, on looking at the fare in the hollow of his hand, disappointedly remarked: "St. Peter would have given more than this." "Yes, quite so, but his destination would have been Lambeth Palace and not Fulham." To the curate at Bradford Church Congress who offered him the loan of an umbrella on a wet night: "I'm not made of sugar." To a vicar who having received the offer of a bishopric, asked Dr. Temple's advice as to whether he should accept it or not: "Why not?" "Well, your lordship, I am no preacher." "I know that, because I have heard you twice." Or to another cleric asking his advice about a bishopric: "Why should you not accept it?" "Because I realise the work is so heavy, that it would kill me in six months." "Well! what of that? Do your duty."

A peculiarity of the mathematical powers of Archbishop Temple mentioned in his *Life*, was his ability to see the total without counting of comparatively large numbers. Everybody can see three, not as two and one, but as three. Most people can see four, some five, some six. . . . But the archbishop certainly could see higher numbers at a glance. I once tested him quite suddenly. . . . "How many sheep in that field?" Instantly came the answer—"Nine!" Once he *saw* thirteen. . . .

He had something of the same power in connection with sound.

"I remember his telling me at Rugby, that he did not like dining in the hall with the boys, because he could not help hearing what they were saying at all the tables."¹

A lady of position sitting near Bishop Temple at dinner, asked him in a most inquiring voice: "My aunt was prevented at the last moment from sailing in that ship which foundered last week: would you not, Bishop, call that a most providential interposition?"

"Can't tell! Didn't know your aunt!"

"I am very pleased, my lord," began a very reverend speaker at a missionary meeting.

"You are not," snapped Bishop Temple, who had taught English grammar at Rugby, "you are *very much* pleased."

¹ *Memoirs of Archbishop Temple.*

When Temple was headmaster of Rugby, he overheard a boy say to a friend :

"Oh yes, I'm entered for the confirmation stakes!"

"Well!" said the doctor, turning sharply round, "you're scratched now."

Archbishop Thomson of York
(1863-1891).

Archbishop Thomson of York, after paying a call one wintry evening, discovered that his old coachman had imbibed freely of something stronger than tea, and was inside the episcopal carriage, asleep. Not wishing to run any risks, his grace took the servant's place on the box-seat, and started for home. All went merrily until he was entering the Palace stable-yard, when he drove against a large boulder by the side of the gateway, almost upsetting the coach. The commotion and noise brought out a stableman who, not recognising the driver in the twilight, shouted out to a mate: "Hullo! Come here! Bill's drunk again, and I'll be blowed if he hasn't the old cock's hat on!"

Some forty years ago, a story was current that the then Archbishop of York, whilst walking across a waste piece of ground on the outskirts of Sheffield, came upon a number of men with a kettle, and asked them what they were so intent upon. The spokesman said: "We are trying to see who can tell the biggest lie, and he's to have this kettle." "I am shocked," exclaimed Dr. Thomson. "I have never told a lie in my life!" "Hey, mon, that's the biggest; give 'im the kettle."

Another day in the same vicinity, the archbishop, who was the personification of muscular Christianity and possessed a stately presence, came across a number of lads at play. Interrogating them as to what they were doing, they told his grace in the broadest of Yorkshire dialects, that they were not making mud-pies, but a church. "I am pleased to hear you say so, and doubtless you all attend the neighbouring Sunday-school," said the archbishop. Then, pointing his stick to a lump of mud, he asked: "What part of the church is that?" "That's the chancel." "And that larger bit?" "The nave." "And this very large place?" "That's the tower." "This is charming, my lads; and which represents the vicar?" "Eh, mon! there we're stumped. Why, it takes too much muck to make a passon!"

Archbishop Trench of Dublin
(1864-1886).

Archbishop Trench of Dublin, in his old age, was in constant fear of paralysis. At a dinner-party one evening, the lady whom he took in to dinner heard him muttering to himself, "Come at last; come at last; *total insensibility of the right limb.*" The lady relieved his mind by saying: "It may comfort you to learn that it is *my* leg which you have been pinching all this time!"

Archbishop Whateley of Dublin
(1831-1864).

The archbishop was once hastening, with his chaplain, to officiate at a country church, when the young cleric,

glancing at his watch, got into a state of nervous agitation at their being late. "My good friend," said Whateley, "I can only say to you what the criminal, going to be hanged, said to those around, who were hurrying him: 'Let us take our time, they can't begin without us.'"

A headmaster complained that some of the officers entrusted with the inspection of the schools were unduly officious, and not qualified for the duty. "Surely," said Archbishop Whateley, "one can judge plum pudding without being the cook." "True, your grace," retorted the headmaster, "but one is not on that account qualified to go into the kitchen, and take the cook's place."¹

Archbishop Whately, addressing a leading vicar, who had a tendency to obesity, said: "Well, Mr. —, your people can't complain of their pulpit not being well filled."

On another occasion he inquired: "Why does the operation of hanging kill a man?" A physiologist replied, "Because inspiration is checked, circulation stopped, and blood suffuses and congests the brain." "Bosh!" replied his grace. "It is because the rope is not long enough to let his feet touch the ground."

"If I keep a dog," he once asked, "why should I have the bother of barking myself?"

During Archbishop Whateley's last illness, his chaplain said to him, "Well, your grace, it is a great

¹ *Life*, by Fitzpatrick.

mercy that, though your body is weak, your intellect is vigorous still." "Talk to me no more about intellect," he replied; "there is nothing for me but Christ."

It was remarked that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was more popular than Shakespeare.

Whateley answered: "Some light wines are pleasant, and we may prefer them to hock; but they will not *keep* like hock."¹

At a missionary meeting speeches were made by Bishops Selwyn and Samuel Wilberforce. To a lady wishing him to compare the two speakers, Whateley said: "When the moon shines bright we say, 'How beautiful is the moon'; when the sun shines, 'How beautiful are the hills, fields, trees,' which it illuminates. Of the sun itself we do not speak. So the really best orator is like the sun; you think of the thing he advocates. The second best is like the moon, you think only of *him*!"¹

**Bishop Samuel Wilberforce of
Winchester (1869-1873); Bis-
hop of Oxford (1846-1869).**

Half a century ago, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce's name was a household word. No public man was better known as a great preacher, as a man of affairs, and also as a wit. His many engagements necessitated much time being spent in railway carriages, where he might frequently be seen absorbed in correspondence. A story which had great currency at the time may be

¹ *Pre-Tractarian Oxford.*

stated in the following words: Two young men were seated in a railway carriage, scanning a morning paper which gave an almost verbatim report of a sermon delivered by the Bishop of Oxford. At one of the stations, who should join them as fellow-traveller but the preacher whose utterances they were discussing, and he immediately ensconced himself in a corner seat and settled down to write. "That is Soapy Sam," whispered one of the young fellows to his companion. "Pluck up courage and tell him that you have been reading his sermon, and ask him to tell you the way to heaven." No sooner had the question been put, than the bishop, with all the charm and suavity which belonged to his magnetic personality, replied without a moment's hesitation: "The best way to heaven? Why, turn to the right and keep straight on."

Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, on overhearing a scholar remark upon the difficulty of rendering the English word "Hearse" into Latin, spoke up: "Oh, that is very easy, *Mors omnibus*."

A lady, once travelling into the city with Bishop Wilberforce, saw a warehouse described as a "Dry-salters." She asked his lordship what a dry-salter was. "Tate and Brady," was the quick reply.

When Lord Palmerston was staying with Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, the then Bishop of Oxford, he started one morning to go to the service at Christ Church. The bishop who intended driving, vainly urged his friend to accompany him in his carriage. Presently it came on to rain, and as the bishop's carriage slowed down

in turning a corner, Lord Palmerston was seen making his way bravely on foot. In passing him, the bishop put his head out of the window, and said with a smile, "How blest is he who ne'er consents by ill advice to walk." Lord Palmerston, whose knowledge of the Scotch version of the Psalms was at least equal to the bishop's, instantly responded with the second line—"Nor sits where men profanely talk."

A very particular old lady took grave exception to her rector's habit of driving tandem about the parish and wrote to the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. S. Wilberforce) to lodge a complaint. On the bishop interrogating the sporting cleric he was met with the observation: "I see no harm in it; your lordship drives a pair of horses abreast, and I drive a pair of horses tandem." "There is the greatest difference," said the bishop. "I must insist upon your abandoning such a method of harnessing your horses." "Well, my lord, I fail to see where the difference lies, though perhaps you can make it clear to me." "Well, well, if you must be told, suppose you were in church, and on looking over the congregation, you saw that dear old lady with her hands abreast, you would say it was an act of reverence; but suppose you noticed that she had her hands one before the other, as she gazed in your direction, would you not deprecate her action?"

It is said that Bishop Wilberforce, when rebuking one of his clergy for fox-hunting, received the following answer: "My lord, every man must have some relaxation. I assure you I never go to balls." "Oh," said

the bishop, "I perceive you allude to my having been to the Queen's State Ball at Windsor, but I give you my word that I was never in the same room with the dancers!" To which the clergyman responded: "My horse and I are getting old, and we are never in the same field with the hounds!" Thus each had satisfied his conscience.

It was the little daughter of the Dean of Peterboro' (Dr. Saunders) who going up to Bishop Samuel Wilberforce with childish simplicity, asked him, speaking with a lisp, "Will you tell me, bishop, why you are called 'Soapy Sam?'" "My little dear," replied the Bishop of Oxford, "I cannot; unless it is because I am always in hot water, but come out with clean hands!"

The sobriquet of "Soapy Sam" given to Bishop Samuel Wilberforce may have had its origin in the combination of his own initials S. O. (Samuel Oxon) with those of the head of Cuddesdon, A. P. (Alfred Potts), in the Theological College Chapel.

It is told of Wilberforce how, on one occasion after leaving the diocese of Oxford, he met one of his old clergy, and after greetings had been exchanged, the bishop inquired after "the old grey horse" belonging to the vicar. When they were alone Wilberforce's chaplain expressed his admiration of the bishop's memory: "What made you think of the horse?" he inquired. "Did you not see the hair on his master's coat?" was the answer.

Archdeacon Daniell tells us that after Dr. Magee

then Bishop of Peterborough, had made his great speech in the House of Lords on the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, his hat was inadvertently taken up by Bishop Wilberforce, and on being told of his mistake the bishop surrendered the hat, remarking gracefully that he wished he had the brains which that hat rightfully covered.

After Bishop Wilberforce had preached in a country church, a farmer went up to him and said, "I must thank your lordship for your sermon. I could not help thinking as you talked about sin, that your lordship must have been a little wildish yourself when you were young."

CHAPTER II

'VARSITY WIT—ANCIENT AND MODERN

IN this chapter there will be found some illustrations of ancient and modern 'varsity wit. The first stories were current in the seventeenth century, and it is interesting to contrast them with examples of present-day humour. In bygone days it seems to have been fashionable to depict the undergraduate as a scholar, tramping the road to the seat of learning, and encountering some humorous incident whilst passing through the country.

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The first story is taken from Miller's *Jests*, published in 1739. In Franklin's *Palestine, Depicted and Described*, published in 1911, is a narrative, almost identical, which that traveller heard among the natives of the Holy Land. Mr. Franklin has annually visited Palestine during the last thirty years. On one visit I was with him, and from personal experience know how he gleaned his stories first-hand. It would be interesting to trace how this old Palestine story got associated with Oxford 200 years ago.

Three or four roguish scholars walking out one day from the University of Oxford, spied a poor fellow near Abingdon, asleep in a ditch with an ass by him, laden with earthenware, the bridle in the sleeper's hand. Says

one of the scholars to the rest, "If you will assist me, I'll help you to a little money, for you know we are bare at present." No doubt of it they were consenting. "Why then," said he, "we'll go and sell this old fellow's ass, for you know the fair is to-morrow, and we shall meet with chapmen enough; therefore, do you take the panniers off, and put them upon my back, and the bridle over my head, and then lead you the ass to the market; and let me alone with the old man."

This being done, accordingly in a little time after the poor man, awaking, was strangely surprised to see his ass thus metamorphosed. "Oh!" said the scholar, "take the bridle out of my mouth, and this load from my back." "Zoons, how came you here?" queried the old man. "Why," said he, "my father, who is a great necromancer, upon an idle thing I did to disoblige him, transformed me into an ass, and now his heart has relented, and I am come to my own shape again. I beg you will let me go home and thank him." "By all means," said the crockery merchant; "I don't desire to have anything to do with conjuration"; and so set the scholar at liberty, who went directly to his comrades, who by this time were making merry with the money they had sold the ass for. But the old fellow was forced to go the next day to seek for a new one at the fair, and after having looked on several, his own was showed him for a very good one. "O, ho!" said he, *what! have he and his father quarrelled again already?* No, no, I'll have nothing to say to him."

Three young wits, as they thought themselves, pass-

ing along the road to Oxford, met a grave old gentleman, with whom they had a mind to be rudely merry. "Good-morrow, Father Abraham," said one. "Good-morrow, Father Isaac," said the next. "Good-morrow, Father Jacob," cried the last. "I am neither Abrabam, Isaac, nor Jacob," replied the old gentlemen, "but Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and lo! here I have found them."¹

Two Oxford scholars meeting on the road with a Yorkshire ostler, they fell to bantering him, and told the fellow that they would prove him to be a horse or an ass. "Well," said the other, "and I can prove your saddle to be a mule." "A mule!" cried one of them, "how can that be?" "Because," said the ostler, "it is something between a horse and an ass."¹

An Oxford undergraduate, coming home to visit his father and mother, and supping one night, a couple of fowls were brought to the table. The student told his parents that by logic and arithmetic he could prove those two fowls to be three. "Well, let us hear," said the father. "Why, this," cried the Oxonian, "is *one*, and this," continued he, "is *two*; two and one, you know, make three." "Since you have made it out so well," answered the old man, "your mother shall have the first fowl, I will have the second, and the third you may keep yourself for your academic learning."¹

One belonging to Merton College put his horse into a field thereunto appertaining; being warned for so doing, and taking no notice thereof, the master of Merton

¹ Miller, *Jests*, 1739.

sent his servant to him, bidding him say, if he continued his horse there, he would cut off his tail. "Say you so," said the person. "Go tell the master, if he cuts off my horse's tail, I will cut off his ears." The servant returning, told the master what he said, whereupon he was sent back to bring back the person to him; who appearing, said the master, "How now, sir, what mean you by this menace you sent me?" "Sir," said the other, "I threatened you not, for I only said if you cut off my horse's tail, I would cut off his ears."¹

A Master of Arts, being reduced to extreme poverty, begged some relief of a locksmith. The smith asked him why he had not learned some art, to get his living by, rather than thus to go about begging. "Alas!" replied the scholar, "I am a master of seven." "Of seven!" replied the smith; "they must be sorry ones indeed, since they are not able to keep you; for my part I have only one as you see, which maintains seven of us—myself, my wife, and five children."¹

Three young Cantabs went one evening to a tavern, recommended for the goodness of the wine—particularly old hock. One of them, who took upon himself to be the wit of the company, ordered the waiter to bring him a bottle of hic, haec, hoc. However, the waiter paid no attention to his command, and upon being called again, was condemned as a stupid rascal, and asked the reason why he did not bring the hock. "Really, gentlemen," said he, "I thought you had *declined* it."¹

A servitor at Oxford, not having wherewithal to buy

¹ *Wits Museum*, 1780.

a new pair of shoes when his old ones were very bad, got them capped at the toes; upon which, being bantered by some of his students, "Why should they not be capped?" said he, "I am sure they are fellows."

A fellow of Oriel, seeing Tom Brown in a tattered gown, said, "Brown, your gown has grown too short for you!" "Ah!" replied the undergrad, "that's true, but it will be long enough before I get another."

A story, that has been used in a hundred and one different ways in recent times, appears to have originated at the universities, and even there honours seem to be divided. The Oxford variant is associated with Dr. Jackson, who was Dean of Christ Church about 1783.

The said Dean Jackson, passing one morning through Tom quad, met some undergraduates, who walked along without capping. The dean called one of them and asked, "Do you know who I am?" "No, sir." "How long have you been a member of the House?" "Eight days, sir." "Oh, very well," said the dean, walking away, "puppies don't open their eyes till the *ninth* day."

The Cambridge variant belongs to the same century, and runs as follows:—

A Bishop of Bristol, who held the office of vice-chancellor about the year 1758, one day met a couple of undergraduates in Trumpington Street, who neglected to pay the accustomed compliment of capping. The bishop inquired the reason of neglect. The two men begged his lordship's pardon, observing that they were freshmen, and did not know him. "How long have

you been in Cambridge?" asked his lordship. "Only eight days," was the reply. "In that case I must excuse you," said the bishop; "puppies never see until they are nine days old."

Two Cantabs dining together, one of them, noticing a *spot of grease* on the neck-cloth of his friend, said, "I see you are a *Grecian*." "Pooh," replied the other, "*that's far-fetched*." "No, indeed," said the wit, "I made it *on the spot*."

At a dinner at Balliol College, the master's guests were discussing the careers of two Balliol men, the one of whom had just been made a judge, and the other a bishop. "Oh!" said a don, "I think the bishop is the greater man. A judge at the most can only say, 'You be hanged,' but a bishop can say, 'You be confounded.'" "Yes," twittered the master; "but if the judge says, 'You be hanged,' you *are* hanged."

The light side of university life will always be associated with the name of the Rev. Edward Bradley, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Cuthbert Bede."

Bradley, having graduated at Durham University in 1848, found himself too young for ordination; so he went and resided at Oxford for a year; and whilst there, though he never matriculated, he wrote *Verdant Green*, a book which depicted the thoughtless side of Oxford life; while his *nom de plume* shows that his mind must frequently have harked back to Durham days. Shortly after ordination, closely shaven and very pale Bradley was introduced as Mr. Verdant Green to

Douglas Jerrold. "Mr. Verdant Green?" exclaimed Jerrold. "I should have thought it was Mr. Blanco White!"

That Durham has still a humorous side the following story will show; it is taken from the life of a late dean.

An undergraduate had sent in an entirely blank set of papers in his terminal examination, commonly called Collections. One tutor after another held up the empty sheets, with the sarcastic remark, "A truly spotless paper, sir!" and when the unfortunate student was expecting a severe rebuke for his idleness, the warden summed up by saying, with a quiet smile, "I notice that your tutors find no fault with your papers, sir. Of course you can pass your examination. What I want to know is, can you go through it?"

An undergraduate, sitting for an examination, was noticed by the don, who had charge of the schools, to be constantly turning up the corner of his blotting-pad. The examiner immediately walked down the room, and on inspecting the pad, discovered just beneath it the photograph of a beautiful girl. "Mr. —, I am astonished at your conduct, how do you account for this?" To which the poor fellow, who had been taken by surprise, replied in faltering tones, "In moments of perplexity I turn to her for inspiration."

"What is the difference," asked Archbishop Whateley of a young cleric he was examining, "between a form and a ceremony? To me, the meaning seems nearly the same, yet there is a very nice distinction; it lies

in this: You sit upon a *form*, and you stand upon a *ceremony*."

An undergraduate of Cambridge being examined for his degree, and failing in every subject upon which he was tried, complained that he had not been questioned concerning the things which he knew. Upon this, the examiner tore off an inch of paper, and pushing it towards him, desired him to write upon it *all* that he knew.

When I was an undergraduate my father told me, I presume as a warning, of a man he had known in his own university days. This luckless student, though sitting for his "Little Go," had left quite unheeded the valuable advice given by St. Paul to the youthful Timothy: "Give attendance to reading." He was confronted with a paper so stiff that he could not answer a single question; and, in a fit of desperation, wrote across it eight words, folded, and sent it up. When the examiner opened it he read: "Fools ask questions which wise men cannot answer."

An Oxford and Cambridge professor got into a heated discussion over the relative value of a classical and mathematical education. The Cantab insisted that a knowledge of the dead languages must be of secondary importance to that of mathematics, which are eminently practical; in fine, the world could do without the classics, while, without mathematics, it could not be carried on for a day. This line of argument so exasperated the Oxonian that it caused him to assert that mathematics, being an inexact science, the results cannot be always

relied on. "Prove such a serious accusation!" exclaimed the irate mathematician. "To prove my case," answered the classic, "I will give you a sum; and when you and your successors in the professorial chair have worked it out, the apology will be tendered, and the accusation withdrawn. Let it be presumed that Achilles and a tortoise had a race of unlimited length. Achilles, being ten times swifter of foot than the tortoise, gave the latter a hundred yards start. When would Achilles catch up the tortoise?"

A former Bishop of Bath and Wells loved to impress on his ordination candidates the importance of a thorough study of the *Analogy* of Bishop Butler. "Good-bye, my dear young friend," he once said in taking leave of a student at the palace door; and then earnestly added, "Whatever you do, don't forget the Butler." "Oh, my lord, I haven't," stammered out the youth, "I have just given him half a crown!"

A candidate for ordination, in his interview with the bishop, was asked whether he read the Bible every day. "Certainly, my lord, every day." "Have you any plan upon which you read your Bible, Mr. —?" "Certainly, my lord." "Do you follow the Church's calendar, and the lessons provided for every day?" "Oh no, my lord." "Have you a plan of your own, then?" "Certainly, my lord." "What is your plan?" "Oh, it's just a plan of my own. I always read what I think is likely to bear on the events of the day." "Well, to-day, for instance, where did you read?" "Oh, my lord, knowing I was going to

see your lordship to-day, I just read the 'Comfortable Words.'"

Porson once sent his gyp with a note to a certain Cantab, requesting him to find out the value of nothing. Next day he met his friend out walking, and stopping him, desired to know whether he had succeeded. "Yes," was the reply. "And what may it be?" asked Porson. "Sixpence," replied the Cantab, "which I gave the man for bringing the note."

The name of Dr. Hawkins, Provost of Oriel, is mentioned in connection with the following:—

It had been proposed to change the academical dress of the undergraduates, and when the subject was brought before Convocation the provost rose, and, to the astonishment of all, announced himself in favour of the change. "But," added he, "I am of opinion that the change should be made by Degrees."

Bishop King of Lincoln used to relate that, when an undergraduate, he called upon the Rev. C. Marriott, who was then vicar of the 'Varsity Church. "I see you are busy. I will not disturb you," exclaimed young King. "That depends," quietly rejoined the vicar, "on the relative importance of what I am doing, and what you have come to me about."

The following is also related of the same Oxford don. A brother-fellow having on the previous evening behaved himself unseemly at dinner (they with other fellows of Oriel had been Anthony Froude's guests at Exeter), ejaculated to Marriott next morning: "My

friend, I'm afraid I made rather a fool of myself last night." "I observed nothing unusual," was the reply.

I am indebted to Dean Burgon's *Lives of Twelve Good Men* for several anecdotes in this chapter. The following is told of H. L. Mansel, who, besides being a double-first, was one of Oxford's greatest wits. He became Dean of St. Paul's.

On being asked how a person could distinguish a real ghost from a false one, Mansel replied, "When you see a ghost, look steadily at him; next, put your forefinger to your eye, applying the extremity of the finger to that part of the organ which is nearest the ear; work your eye about, this way and that. If you perceive that the ghost remains stationary, well, it's a very serious business indeed. But if, on the contrary, you notice he moves about with your eye, why then its *all my eye*."

Mansel once described dogmatism as puppyism full grown.

The same don, walking round "the Parks" with the Master of Pembroke, when Gladstone's Bill for disendowing the Irish Church was in progress, broke out: "I cannot understand how he can possibly reconcile his conscience to such wholesale robbery." "He pleads," was the reply, "that he is acting on conviction." "Oh, then I see how it is," instantly rejoined Mansel, raising his forefinger as if in order to add point to the antithesis. "The ordinary process has been reversed. Commonly, you know, conviction

follows robbery. In this case, it seems that robbery follows conviction."

*

The first time that Pitt went to Cambridge after his election for the university, all the clerics were, as might be expected, hoping for lawn sleeves and other good things in the gift of their representative. Dr.—preached before the young premier from the following text: "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" •

The famous Dr. Aldrich, Dean of Christ Church, the never-to-be-forgotten composer of the good old catch—"Hark, the merry Christ Church bells," was an inveterate smoker. His pipe was his breakfast, dinner, and supper; a student of the House, at ten o'clock one night, finding it difficult to persuade a "freshman" of the fact, laid him a wager that the dean was at that instant smoking. Away he hurried to the deanery to decide the controversy, and on gaining admission apologised for the intrusion by relating the occasion of it. "Well," replied the dean, in perfect good humour, with his pipe in his hand, "you see you have lost your wager, for I am not smoking, but filling my pipe."¹

Bishop Field Flowers Goe was often brought into notoriety through his unusual name. I remember at the Church Congress at Wakefield, the then Bishop of Ripon introducing him as the new Bishop of Melbourne, and punning upon his names. This incident doubtless reminded some of those present of an event which

¹ *Oxford and Cambridge Nuts to Crack*, 1810.

took place when Field was an undergraduate at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. A joke was made at his expense, and told on his failing to pass his "Little Go." It ran as follows:—

"The Field was ploughed, the Flowers were plucked, and it was no Little Go."

A mathematical honourman of Cambridge, who had just gained distinction in his Finals, was returning to his rooms after celebrating the event at a fellow-undergraduate's wine-party, in which he had been indulging not wisely but too well.

His tutor, accidentally meeting him on the side of the college quadrangle opposite to that where his rooms were situated, reminded him that his door was over against where he was standing. To this the mathematician replied:

"It's all right, the whole place is swimming round; I'll make a bolt for my door when it passes."

"Well, Mr. A.!" exclaimed the tutor, "I've heard of people trying to square a circle, but you go one better, you try to circle the square."

"You can't blame me," was the young Cantab's retort, "I'm only demonstrating my examination papers on *Euclid*, Book iv., prop. 6–9."

A highly distinguished graduate of Oxford determined to enter the Nonconformist ministry, and quite unnecessarily published a manifesto. In his enumeration of the various methods by which he was going to mark his aloofness from the sacer-

dotalism of the Established Church, he wrote: "I shall wear no clothes, to distinguish me from my fellow-Christians."

The story runs that W. E. Jelf proposed to Miss Gaisford, who refused him; that Gaisford, Dean of Christ Church, urged the suitor's deserts, as of a scholar knowing more about $\gamma\epsilon$ than any man in Oxford; that the young lady answered, "It might be so, but she herself knew too much about $\mu\epsilon\nu$ to accept him."¹

Mark Pattison in his Memoirs writes: "My father had been a commoner of B.N.C., taking his degree in 1809. His tutor was Hodson. I will only set down one of his many anecdotes of this college celebrity. Returning to college, after one long vacation, Hodson drove the last stage into Oxford with post-horses. The reason he gave for this piece of ostentation was that it should not be said that the first tutor of the first college of the first university of the world entered it with a pair."

There is an old chestnut to the effect that at a Horace lecture an undergrad gravely replied, on being requested to scan a line of Horace, "I don't scan, sir; I never had any ear for music."

"Your battels, sir, are not battles, they are campaigns," Bishop Magee said to a young friend at Oxford in reference to a slight increase in his term's college bills.

¹ *Reminiscences of Oxford*, by the Rev. W. Tuckwell.

The following is an inscription on the tombstone at Harrogate of the celebrated Oxford don:—

MARCUS PATTISON

COLL. LINCOLN. APUD. OXON. PER. 23. ANNOS.

RECTOR.

NATUS. 10. OCTOB. 1813; OBIT. 30. JULII. 1884.

ÆTATIS. ANNO. 71.

Shortly after the stone's erection the old sexton said to me in broad Yorkshire, "Maister, some of us have been trying to read this lettering. Could you tell me if we have got hold of the right meaning?" Construing, "Mark, this is Rector Pattison, who for collaring twenty-three oxen about Lincoln. . . ." Then, after a pause, adding: "Does the third line state the dates? And the bottom line say he got seventy-one days?"

Richard Porson, the greatest Greek scholar England has ever produced, never could go to bed without his toddy. When he was Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, returning on one occasion to his college rooms after midnight, he looked first for a tallow candle and then for his toddy. After spending much time in a fruitless search he was overheard to exclaim in pathetic despairing tones: "οὐδὲ τόδῃ οὐδὲ τᾷλλῳ" (neither this nor that). Or according to a variant, upon his gyp once peeping in before daylight, and finding him still up, Porson answered his *quod petis?*—whether he wanted toddy or tallow candle—with οὐ τόδῃ οὐδ' ἄλλῳ (neither toddy nor tallow).

The late Esquire Bedel of Oxford gives an interesting reminiscence of John Keble as an undergraduate. "During a walk in the country, while plucking with some difficulty a twig of may-blossom, I remarked to Keble that 'it was *May* yielding to *must*.'

"'Yes,' added my scholar-like companion, 'it is the *contingent* yielding to the *positive*.'"

A piece of Oxford gossip may be subjoined, which once interested and amused Oxford from the prominence of some of the *dramatis personæ*. Dr. Hornby's daughter Arabella was of a good figure, and attracted notice as she rode out, regularly attended by a smart looking, well mounted man-servant.

After riding out for some time followed by the groom, she chose to ride off with him as her *bridegroom*. The incident, however, did not end here; it happened that a fellow of Brasenose (who from a peculiar gait or make was called in his college "Dr. Toe") was an admirer of the spirited young lady. His supposed disappointment at her escapade elicited the following *jeu d'esprit* from the ready pen of Reginald Heber, then an undergraduate of Brasenose College, afterwards bishop, and author of "From Greenland's Icy Mountains":—

"'Twixt footman John and Dr. Toe
A rivalry befell,
Which should be the favoured beau
And bear away the *belle*. (Miss Arabella.)

The footman gained the lady's heart,
And who can wonder? No man;
The *whole* prevailed against a *part*,—
'Twas footman versus toe-man."¹

¹ *Recollections of Oxford*, by G. V. Cox.

Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield, delivered an address at the Sheldonian Theatre, at Oxford, at the close of 1867, in the course of which he made mention of the fact that he was one of the three bishops who rowed in the first Oxford *v.* Cambridge race, the other two being the Bishop of Newcastle and the Bishop of St. Andrews. Bishop Selwyn might have added that the Cambridge boat, of which he and Bishop Tyrrel formed part of the crew, was beaten by the Oxford, in which Bishop Wordsworth rowed.

Cradock, in his *Memoirs*, tells us, that when a preacher was very obnoxious to the students at Cambridge, it was the custom for them to express disapprobation by scraping their feet. An eloquent preacher, Dr. Scott, being one day thus saluted, signified his intention of preaching against the practice of scraping, and very shortly afterwards he kept his word. Taking for his text, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil" (Eccles. v. 1), he delivered a discourse so eloquent as to extort universal approbation.

The following three are taken from F. A. Paley's *Greek Wit*, 1881 edition:—

A stole a fish in joke, and gave it to B. Being charged with the theft, A says, "I swear that I have not got it, and I know no one else who took it." B says, "I swear I did not take it, and I know no one else who has it."

Athenaeus, viii. p. 338, c.

A man at Sparta said to a Laconian, "You cannot stand as long as I on one leg."

"No," replied the other, "*but any goose can.*"

PLUTARCH.

A descendant of Harmodius was taunting Iphicrates with his low birth. "The difference between us is this," he replied, "my family begins with me, and yours ends with you."

PLUTARCH, *Iphic.* 5.

An interesting glimpse into Athenian undergraduate life is given in Cape's *University Life in Ancient Athens*. A few lines we quote:—

"Nor . . . was this the only ordeal which the freshman had to bear. . . . Gregory even in a funeral speech on his friend Basil, lingers complaisantly on such memories of their youth. He tells us how the novice, just arrived and carried off to the house of some acquaintance, was set upon and badgered by the senior men about him. If he was very fresh, and inexperienced in repartee, they resorted to mere vulgar banter; but if he showed any quickness in retort, they tried upon him all the resources of their practised wit."

Dr. E., recovered from some consumptive disorder by the use of egg diet, soon after married. W., the master of University College, Oxford, went to Dr. L., then sick in bed, and resolved to discharge a pun which he had made, "Well, sir," said he, "Dr. E. has been *egged* on to matrimony. "Has he so?" said L. "Why, then I hope the *yoke* v 'll sit easy." ¹

A roguish tenant of Balliol College slily felled the

¹ Date 1840.

trees upon the farm and put the money in his pocket. Soon after he called upon Dr. Leigh to pay his rent, and the doctor inquired into the state of the trees. "Alas! sir," said the tenant, "a great misfortune has happened to them; a high wind has blown them all down." "No, no," said the doctor, who knew his man, "you mistake: it could not have been a high wind, but a cutting wind to do so much execution."¹

The following four stories are found in *Oxford and Cambridge Nuts to Crack*, published about 1810:—

A story was told, "in the days that are gone," that a youth being brought to Oxon, after he had paid the tutor and others the several college and university fees, was informed that he must *subscribe* to the *Thirty-nine Articles*. "With all my heart," said our freshman, "pray, how much is it?"

A don once insisting on the importance of discipline, was rudely taken up by a young officer who had just received his commission. "What, sir," said he, "do you mean to apply that word *discipline* to the officers of the army? It may be well enough for the *privates*." "Yes, sir, I do," replied the doctor sternly. "It is *discipline* that makes the scholar, it is discipline that makes the soldier, it is discipline that makes the gentleman, and the *want of discipline* has made you what you are."

An Oxford professor addressing an undergrad—"Sir, your tongue goes to work before your brains; and when your brain does work, it generally is nothing

¹ Date 1840.

but error and absurdity. The maxim of men of experience is to think twice before they act once. But you have read *little*, thought *less*, and know *nothing*."

A dispute once arose between the doctors of law and medicine, in Cambridge, as to which had the right of precedence.

"Does the thief or hangman take the precedence at execution?" asked the chancellor, on reference to his judgment.

"The former," answered a wag.

"Then let the doctors of law have the precedence," said the chancellor.

A schoolmaster asking one of his boys, on a sharp wintry morning, what was the Latin for cold, the boy hesitated a little. "What," said he, "can't you tell me?" "Yes, yes," replied the boy, "I have it at my finger-ends."¹

In connection with an army examination, it is related of a certain eye-doctor, who tested the cadets' powers of vision, that whatever questions he asked the first candidates he always addressed to the subsequent ones. On one occasion this examiner had requested a candidate to look out of the window. "What do you see?" "A hill." "Yes, anything on the hill?" "A winding road." "Anything on it?" "A cart loaded with timber drawn by four horses." "Your sight is excellent; you will pass." No. 2 enters. "What do you see out of that window?" "A hill." "Quite correct, anything else?" "A winding road." "Excel-

¹ Miller, 1739.

lent! anything on the road?" "A cart loaded with timber drawn by four horses." "Unfortunately for you that cart has turned the bluff of the hill three minutes ago. Good-morning."

Dr. Vaughan, when Headmaster of Harrow, happening to come across a boy angling, which was against the school rules, said, "Do you know, Greenwith, that Dr. Johnson defines a fishing rod as a long stick with a worm at one end, and a fool at the other?" The boy seemed puzzled for an instant, and then asked quite simply: "Please, sir, when you cane a boy, which of you is the worm?"

On one occasion, when good Queen Bess visited the headmaster's schoolroom at Eton, her august majesty, with a quizzical look at the swishing block, asked a royal scholar to explain the use of such a severe piece of furniture. The classic, in a subdued and tremulous voice repeated the third line of the second book of the *Æneid of Virgil*: "Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem." (My Queen, thou biddest me renew an unutterable sorrow.)

CHAPTER III

PLAY ON WORDS

At a prize-giving at Highgate, Bishop Creighton said : "The days have long ceased when bishops could visit Highgate woods for the purpose of hunting. I presume that they used to go there to hunt boars. Nowadays, bores hunt me, even in my own house."¹

Shuter, the celebrated comedian, who was attracting large crowds at one of the theatres in the character of "Rambler," on one occasion went to hear George Whitefield, who, fixing his eyes on the actor sitting in a pew in front of him, said : "And thou, poor Rambler, who hast long rambled from Him, come also. Oh, end thy rambling by coming." Shuter, instead of taking offence, became a regular attendant at Whitefield's Chapel.

Outside Little Bray is a wheelwright's yard filled with disabled post-chaises and other obsolete means of conveyance. The skeleton of an old yellow wheel—its spokes dislocated—caught the eye of a visitor to Father Healy, as both happened to pass it. "What a story those old wheels could tell of their wanderings," remarked the visitor. "They would say they are

¹ *Life and Letters of Bishop Mandell Creighton.*

untired," replied Healy. "It's because they are untired they would be outspoken," was the concluding remark.

During the evening two clerics dined with the father, and the host, probably thinking of his conversation that day, said: "I give you the toast of two spokes in the ecclesiastical wheel, and if they are not good spokes, they are at least good fellows." "May they show good metal at every round," chimed in one of the clerical guests. "And never *tire*," retorted Healy. "But, I hope, never *box*," mildly interpolated a lay guest.

"The Duke and Duchess of Teck and Sir Stafford and Lady Northcote and I returned in a royal saloon to London. *En route* the Duke could not find his gloves and accused me of taking them. Sir Stafford declared that he knew nothing about them. There was great laughter when the Duke discovered that Sir Stafford was actually wearing them, having picked them up from the floor, in the belief that they were his own. The Duchess said she would tell the Liberals the way the Conservative leader treated the private property of the Royal Family. Sir Stafford replied: 'Your Royal Highness must kindly pardon me; the fact is that I have, as leader of the party, got into the habit of taking up the glove whenever it is thrown down.'"¹

Canon Teignmouth-Shore on one occasion arranged for a party of members of the Royal Family to visit the Bank of England. Everything of interest in the bank

¹ *Some Recollections of Canon Teignmouth-Shore.*

was shown by the governor himself, and each of the princesses signed a thousand-pound note which was being printed at the time, instead of the chief cashier doing so. This has for ages been the custom when any imperial or royal personages have visited the bank, and the notes thus signed are not issued but placed in a great album. One of the princesses suggested to the governor that she would prefer to keep and use the note she had signed. He, however, explained that it would be of no use unless it was "signed by May," the chief clerk. The princess turned to her cousin, Princess May of Teck (now Queen Mary), who was of the party that day, and said: "All right, May, you can keep yours when you sign it 'May,' and get a thousand pounds for it!"¹

"We must be unanimous," observed Hancock, on the occasion of signing the declaration of American Independence; "there must be no pulling different ways." "Yes," observed Franklin, "we must all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

We are indebted to the *Strand Magazine* for the following:—It is to Mr. Winston Churchill that we owe the wittiest summing up of a parliamentary candidate: "He is asked to stand, he wants to sit, and he is expected to lie."

Theodore Hook's residence at Putney afforded occasion for the delivery of one of the best of his *bon-mots*. A friend, viewing Putney Bridge from the

¹ *Some Recollections of Canon Teignmouth-Shore.*

garden that overhung the Thames, observed that he had been informed that it was a very good investment, and, turning to his host, inquired "if such was the case, if the bridge really answered?"

"I don't know," said Hook, "but you have only to cross it, and you are sure to be *tolled*."

Dean Herbert of Manchester and the learned Canon Parkinson were always having passages of arms. When the dean was away from the Cathedral, for some reason the candles were removed from the candlesticks which stood upon the Holy Table. The dean happening to return, found the candles missing, and complained to the canon.

"Canon, canon, how is it that when I am here the candles are never disturbed, but during my absence they are removed?"

"Well, Mr. Dean," replied the courteous canon, "you see it is a natural inference: when you are away the light is gone."

"Oh! oh! I see; and I leave the sticks behind me!"

During a visit Queen Elizabeth made to the famous Lord Chancellor Bacon, at a small country seat, which he had built for himself before his preferment, she asked him how it came that he had made himself so small a house? "It is not I, madam," answered he, "who have made my house too small for myself, but your Majesty, who has made me too big for my house."

Lord Bacon was reduced to such poverty towards the end of his life that he wrote to James I. for assistance

in these words. " . . . I, who desire to live to study, may be driven to study to live."

A canon of Windsor, who was taking his evening walk, met an acquaintance returning home somewhat worse for liquor. "Whence do you come?" asked the canon.

"I don't know," was the reply. "I have been *spinning* out the evening with a friend."

"Aye," rejoined the canon, "and now you are *reeling* it home." ,

By some, a certain dignitary was voted a bore; by others, a bear; and, with formidable co-operation, they baited him as cruel. People sometimes bait a bear as a boar. And an unkind epigram was made upon him in which it was said that he presented the zoological phenomenon of being both a bear and a bore.

Two silly brothers, twins, were very much about town in Hook's time; and they took every pains, by dressing alike, to deceive their friends as to their identity. Tom Hill was expatiating upon these modern Dromios, at which Hook grew impatient.

"Well, said Hill, "you will admit that they resemble each other wonderfully: they are as like as two peas."

"They are," retorted Hook, "and quite as green!"

Sir Walter Scott used to say that his friends might be very bad accountants, but were very good book-keepers.

A young curate, on being asked how he liked his new rector, replied, "I should like my rector extremely well

were it not for his wife who is the di-rector, and his eldest daughter who is the mis-director."

A preacher once concluded a sermon on the differences between Christians by saying, "Let us agree to disagree without being disagreeable."

A Scotch minister during the Rump Parliament, in a babbling prayer, said, "Bless the grand council, the parliament, and grant they may all hang together."

A country fellow standing by said, "Yes, yes, with all my heart, the sooner the better; and I am sure it is the prayer of all good people!"

"But, friend," said Sandy, "I don't mean as that man means, but pray they may all hang together in accord and concord."

"No matter what cord," rejoined the fellow, "so it is but a strong cord."

A noisy street-corner politician coming to the climax of his oration, shouted, "I want land reform; I want housing reform; I want education reform; I want——" One of the crowd of listeners here ejaculated "chloroform!"

A stockbroker, conversing with Prebendary Webb-Peploe, said with an exalted air, "Why, when I started business in the city as a young man, I had not the proverbial shilling. I can assure you I was without a cent in my pockets."

"I don't doubt it," exclaimed the great preacher, "but there were other pockets!"

Brougham, speaking of the salary attached to a rumoured appointment to a new judgeship, said it was

all moonshine. Lyndhurst, in his dry and waggish way, remarked, "Maybe so, my lord, but I have a strong notion that moonshine though it be, you would like to see the first quarter of it."

The three degrees of comparison in a lawyer's progress are, getting on—getting onner (honour)—getting onnest (honest).

Sir Godfrey Kneller preferred portrait-painting for this reason. "Painters of history," said he, "make the dead live, and do not begin to live themselves till they are dead; I paint the living, and they enable me to live."

CHAPTER IV

QUICK REPARTEE

AT a farewell dinner to Dean John Gregg, just made Bishop of Cork, a bottle of rich old Waterloo port, instead of making a rapid circuit, rested before the guest of the evening. "Come," cried his grace of Dublin from the head of the table, "though you *are* John Cork, you mustn't 'stop the bottle!'"

The Bishop of Cork replied, "I see your grace is disposed to *draw me out*. But, though *charged with cork*, I'm not *going to be screwed*."

"We are all most anxious to see you *elevated*," now came from the chair.

"I leave to your grace the privilege of *opening the ports*," was the reply.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter, when about to give a lecture on Dante at Petersham, was introduced by a neighbouring vicar as the modern "Golden-mouthed Chrysostom." Whereupon the bishop, showing him a tooth stopped with gold, said in pleasant banter, "Never look a gift-horse in the mouth."

A gentleman, praising the generosity of his friend, observed, "He spends his money like water." "Then, of course, he liquidates his debts," rejoined the other.¹

¹ Hazlitt.

A young man, talking to Talleyrand, was seeking to justify his own dishonest practices in business. "You see, monseigneur," he said, "one must live!"

"Indeed, monsieur," replied the prince, "I do not see the necessity."

When Richard Baxter was on one occasion brought before Judge Jeffreys. "Richard," exclaimed the brutal justice, "I see a rogue in your face."

"I had not known before, my lord," calmly replied Baxter, "that my face was a mirror,—a personal reflection!"

Dissenting ministers are sometimes rather hardly dealt with by their Boards of Governors, and one of these oppressed victims was complaining to Rowland Hill of the harsh treatment which he had received. He said that he knew that the Bench of Bishops was also hard, sometimes, upon the clergy; and that, for his part, he did not see any difference between a Board and a Bench. Rowland Hill smiled a sagacious smile, and replied, "Pardon me, I will show you a most essential difference between the two; a board is a bench that has no legs to stand upon."

A certain country squire, rebutting a merry Andrew, asked why he played the fool. "For the same reason," said he, "that you do; that of wants. You do it for want of wit; and I do it for want of money."¹

A sporting parson was once severely taken to task by one of his grave parishioners, who told him that it was extremely wrong for him to carry a gun, conclud-

¹ Miller, *Jests*, 1739.

ing with the remark, "I do not see in my Bible that the apostles went out shooting." Perhaps the sport-loving vicar thought it well to answer a fool according to his folly, and frivolously replied, "No, sport was bad in Palestine; they went out fishing instead."

Louis XIV. asked Bossuet whether it was lawful for a Christian to go to the theatre. "There are strong reasons against, and great examples in favour of his doing so," replied the bishop.

A clergyman was arguing with a friend of his on the desirability of attending church. At last he put the question squarely: "What is your personal reason for not attending?" The gentleman smiled in a quiet way as he replied, "The fact is, one finds so many hypocrites there." Returning the smile, the clergyman said, "Do not let that keep you away—there is always room for one more."

Once, while addressing an open-air meeting, an atheist asked Bishop Boyd Carpenter if he believed that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. "When I go to heaven I will ask Jonah," said his lordship. "But, supposing," the other persisted, "he is not there!" "Then *you* will have to ask him," was the quick retort.

Some one observed, "Matches are made in heaven." "Yes," replied Sir Charles Flower, "and they are often *dipped* in the other place."

As regards the social charm of women, we may quote the following little conversation:—

"No woman is worth looking at after thirty," said

Mrs. A., a bride, with all the youthful arrogance of twenty-one summers.

"Quite true, my dear," answered Lady D., a very pretty woman some ten or fifteen years older; "and she is not worth listening to before."

Not long since, a certain noble peer in Yorkshire who is fond of boasting of his Norman descent, thus addressed one of his tenants who he thought was not speaking to him with proper respect.

"Do you not know that my ancestors came over with William the Conqueror?"

"And maybe," retorted the sturdy Saxon, nothing daunted, "they fund mine here when they coomed."

The noble lord felt he had the worst of it.

CHAPTER V

USING THE OCCASION

"THE King over the water!" was a toast, openly given and enthusiastically received at a Scottish banquet in London last night, and in honour of King George. That sentiment had never before been given, at least in these islands, in honour of a Sovereign of the House of Hanover, for it is the oldest of all Jacobite toasts; and it was accustomed to be so symbolically used that finger-bowls were abolished at the dinner-table at Windsor Castle, certainly until late Victorian times, because of the inherited Jacobite habit of drinking the health of the monarch with all apparent loyalty, but literally "over the water."¹

King Edward VII., on his accession to the throne, allowed finger-glasses to be introduced on the royal table; these had been prohibited since the reign of George I. to prevent guests, who were at heart Jacobites, from passing their wine-glasses over the water contained in the finger-glasses when drinking the health of the King, thus saving their conscience.

Some years ago, a clergyman was appealing for funds

¹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, ec. 1911. (Written during the King's visit to India.)

towards the rebuilding of a church, and he wrote, amongst others, to the Right Honourable John Bright. Mr. Bright replied, regretting inability to help, and explaining that it was against his rules to aid in building churches in connection with the Established Church. The vicar hastened to reassure the great politician, pointing out that, as the old edifice which it had become necessary to replace was still standing, Mr. Bright might contribute something towards its demolition! •

Bishop Boyd Carpenter once concluded a speech on gambling with the following words: "There is something extremely fascinating in risk, and without the element of risk many glorious enterprises of which we are justly proud would not have been undertaken. Therefore the element of risk is not a vicious thing. The real vice lies in the desire to get without giving. The real gambler is the man who wants to get his *Quid* without his *Quo*. That is a joke I had not intended to make; but, at all events, the definition is a sovereign one."

Bishop Boyd Carpenter, on rising to deliver an address at a literary society meeting, opened his speech by saying that the chairman had remarked privately to him that never before this occasion had he been behind the foot-lights. He, the bishop, was rejoicing in the presence of the foot-lights, which assured him that however dull any of the speakers might be, some light would be thrown upon the subject; and, though they might not have deeply

reflected, the gas light would cast a slight reflection upon them."

As William the Conqueror was in the act of disembarking on Albion's shores, his foot gave way on the shingly beach, causing him to fall forward on his hands, at which misadventure his soldiers raised a cry of distress. "An evil omen!" they exclaimed. "Nay, my lords," replied William, "by the splendour of God, I have taken possession of England with both my hands; it is now mine, and what is mine is yours."

It is a great advantage to a speaker to be able to turn laughter against his opponent. At a large open-air service in the City of London, the speaker had been much interrupted and laughed at when preaching on religious faith by a man who persisted that no intellectual person could believe in anything he could not see. At last the cleric turned to his opponent and pointedly inquired if he had any brains. "Certainly," was the reply, "and they cause me to make the assertion to which you object." "Have you ever seen your brains?" was the next question. Absolute quiet was restored, and the rest of the address was delivered amidst silence.

When Jeremy Taylor, who in after years became one of the most eloquent bishops of the English Church, preached as a young man before Archbishop Laud, his Grace of Canterbury took exception to the preacher's youth though he had been delighted with the sermon. On which Jeremy Taylor begged his

grace to pardon the fault, and promised that "if he lived he would mend it."

When I was a curate of the ancient, richly endowed City Church of St. Botolph, Aldersgate, one Sunday night after the sermon a man interviewed me in the vestry, and begged for relief. I asked him if he slept in the parish, as the rule was that relief could only be given to those who did so. "I claim to be fully qualified in that respect," he said, "for I have been asleep all through your thirty minutes' sermon this evening." His request was generously acceded to and his truthfulness rewarded.

Not long after Professor Huxley had coined the word "Agnostic" it became popular for some young men to espouse the high-sounding term. An individual with more conceit than brains, on going up to Mr. Spurgeon, accosted him, saying with a very bumptious air, "Do you know what I am, Mr. Spurgeon? I am an agnostic."

"What are you?"

"Why, an agnostic. You know what an agnostic is."

"Let me see," said the great preacher, "an agnostic—in Greek—don't know; equivalent in Latin—ignoramus! Thank you very much; you are an ignoramus, are you?"

Spurgeon was once asked if a man who learned to play a cornet on Sunday would go to heaven. The great preacher's reply was characteristic. Said he:

"I do not see why he should not, but (after a pause) I doubt whether the man next door will."

One Sunday during a sudden shower a number of people took shelter in Rowland Hill's chapel whilst he was preaching.

Noticing this, he exclaimed, "Many people are greatly to be blamed for making their religion a cloak; but I do not think these are much better who make of it an umbrella."

Richard Baxter said of some church-goers in his day, that they had a "wheelbarrow religion." "They went when they were shoved."

The fifth Earl of Berkeley, who died in 1810, had always declared that anyone might, without disgrace, be overcome by superior numbers, but that he would never surrender to a single highwayman. As he was crossing Hounslow Heath one night, his travelling carriage was stopped by a man on horseback, who put his head in at the window, and said, "I believe you are Lord Berkeley?"

"I am."

"I believe you have always boasted that you could never surrender to a single highwayman?"

"I have."

"Well," presenting a pistol, "I am a single highwayman, and I say, 'Your money or your life.'"

"You cowardly dog," said Lord Berkeley, "do you think I can't see your confederate skulking behind you?"

The highwayman, who was really alone, looked

hurriedly round, and Lord Berkeley shot him through the head.¹

Some years ago, one of the wooden mitres carved by Grinling Gibbons over the dean's stall in Canterbury Cathedral happened to become loose. The architect inquired of the dean whether he should make it fast. "For, perhaps, it may fall on your reverence's head." "Suppose it does fall on my head, I don't know that *a mitre falling on my head* would hurt it."

A beautiful girl stepped into an American store, and asked the price of a pair of gloves. "Why," said a gallant but impudent clerk, "you may have them for a kiss." "Agreed!" said the young lady, pocketing the gloves. "Agreed! and as I see you give credit, you may charge it in your books, and collect it the best way you can."²

A boy who was obstructing the light from some of his school-fellows, on being twitted that his father was not a glazier made capital out of the common remark by saying, "Quite true, but he has transmitted to his son a most transparent character."

Of Lord Stowell and Lord Eldon Lord Russell used to tell, with infinite zest, a story, which he declared to be highly characteristic of the method by which they made their fortunes. When they were young men at the Bar, having had a stroke of professional success, they determined to celebrate the occasion by having a

¹ *Old and Odd Memories*, by the Hon. L. A. Tollemache. Published by Edward Arnold (by permission).

² Hazlitt.

dinner at a tavern and going to the play. When it was time to call for the bill Lord Eldon dropped a sovereign. He and his brother searched for it in vain, and came to the conclusion that it had fallen between the boards of the uncarpeted floor. "This is a bad job," said Stowell, "we must give up the play." "Stop a bit," said Eldon, "I know a trick worth two of that," and called the waitress. "Betty!" said he, "we've dropped two sovereigns, see if you can find them?" Betty went down on her hands and knees, and found the one sovereign, which had rolled under the fender. "That's a very good girl, Betty," said Eldon, pocketing the coin, "and when you find the other, you can keep it for your trouble." So the two young barristers went with a light heart to the play, and so eventually to the bench and the woolsack.¹

To invite a person to your house for what you can get out of him or her is certainly a very despicable thing to do. Such treatment was accorded to Mary Ann Paton, *alias* Lady Lennox, *alias* Mrs. Wood. It is said to have occurred at Philadelphia in 1840. During the entertainment, the hostess went up to Mrs. Wood on her begging to be excused from singing. "What! not sing, Mrs. Wood? Why it was for this that I invited you to my party, and I told my guests that you were coming." "That quite alters the case," said Mrs. Wood. "I was not at all aware of this, or I should not have refused; but, since you have invited me professionally, I

¹ *Old and Odd Memories*, by the Hon. L. A. Tollemache. Published by Edward Arnold (by permission).

shall, of course, sing immediately." "What a good kind creature!" rejoined the hostess. "I thought you could not persist in refusing me." So Mrs. Wood sang the entire evening, giving every song she was asked for, being greatly encored. In the morning, to the utter astonishment of the parsimonious hostess, a bill for two hundred dollars was presented to her from Mr. Wood, for his wife's professional services, which, of course, she had to pay.¹

A nobleman, seeing a large stone lying near his gate, ordered his servant, with an oath, to send it to Jericho. "If," said the servant, "I were to throw it to Heaven, it would be more completely out of your lordship's way."

When Jenny Lind was in America, she attended a well-known church in Boston. Strange to say, the preacher happened to take "Social Amusements" as the theme of his discourse, without in the least dreaming that the fair vocalist formed one of his congregation. In the course of his sermon, the preacher strongly deprecated dancing, card-playing, billiards, theatre-going; but was strong in his approval of music. Suddenly the cleric was interrupted by an interloper on the pulpit steps, who, with more wit than wisdom, inquired of the reverend gentleman whether anyone who died at Jenny Lind's concerts would go to heaven. The preacher was equal to the emergency. "A Christian," he loudly replied, "will go to heaven wherever he dies, and a fool

¹ *Musician's Wit and Humour*, by F. J. Crowest.

will be a fool wherever he is, even if he is on the steps of the pulpit.”¹

Shuter, one day meeting a friend with his coat patched at the elbow, observed he should be ashamed of it. “How so?” said the other, “it is not the first time that I have seen you out at the elbow.” “Very true,” replied Ned, “I should think nothing of exhibiting twenty holes—a hole is *the accident of the day*; but a patch is *premeditated poverty*.”

A Romanist, in warm dispute with Wilkes, observed, “Where was your religion before Luther?” “Did you wash your face this morning?” “I did, sir.” “Well then, where was your face before it was washed?”

In a mediæval book we read of a certain rustic clown, who came to a bishop, and told him he had married a woman who was poor, but heretofore had been rich; and, asking his advice if he might put her away and marry a richer, was answered he might not; unto whom the clown replied: “Why, my lord, you have put away your poor diocese and taken a richer.”

A lady conversing about religious matters, asked why there were no marriages in heaven. The divine replied: “Because there are no women.” The lady returned the jest, “Women there are, but I fear they cannot find a priest.”

Theodore Hook was dining with a Mr. Hatchet, who said deprecatingly, “Ah, my dear fellow, I am

¹ *Musician's Wit and Humour*, by F. J. Crowest

sorry to say you will not get to-day such a dinner as our friend Tom Moore gave us." "Certainly not," replied Hook, "from a hatchet one can expect nothing but a chop."

Asked if a child was not "the image of its father," who was a very weak-charactered man, Foote replied, "that he did not know, but there was certainly *a great deal of the child in the father.*"

Two gentlemen were standing together as a young lady passed by. Said one, "There goes the handsomest woman I ever saw." She, hearing him, turned back, and seeing him very ugly, said: "I wish I could, in return, say as much of you." "So you may, madam," said he, "and lie as I did."¹

Love laughs at locksmiths; to which the dejected but still humorous suitor replied: "Yes, but in this case, the father is a gunsmith."

An optimistic frog and a pessimistic frog fell into a pail of milk, and were in danger of being drowned. The pessimist sank to the bottom and expired without a struggle, but the optimist kept swimming round. He was very tired, and sorely tempted to give up, but he struggled on and on, and finally found himself *sitting on a pat of butter* which he had himself churned.

The following is Mark Twain's answer to a young author, who had written to ask if fish, as an article of diet, was good for the brain. "Yes, fish is good for the brain, on account of its phosphorus. To judge from

¹ Miller, *Jests*, 1739.

the specimen of composition you send, I should say that a couple of whales would be all you would want for the present. Not the largest size, but simply good middling-sized whales."

Lord Faulkland was elected so young to sit in Parliament that some of the members opposed his admission, urging "that he had not sown all his wild oats." "Then," replied he, "it will be the best way to sow them in the House, where there are so many geese to pick them up."¹

By kindly permission of *The Times* we are allowed to give the following excellent metaphor: "A man is not blamed for being splashed with mud. He is commiserated. But if he has stepped into a puddle which he might easily have avoided, we say that it is his own fault. If he protests that he did not know it was a puddle, we say that he ought to know better; but if he says that it was after all quite a clean puddle, then we judge him deficient in the sense of cleanliness."

Lord Bacon, on one occasion, was about to pass sentence of death on a man of the name of Hogg, who had just been tried for a long career of crime. The prisoner suddenly claimed to be heard in arrest of judgment, saying, with an expression of arch confidence as he addressed the bench: "I claim indulgence, my lord, on the plea of relationship, for I am convinced your lordship will never be unnatural enough to hang one of your own family. My name,

¹ Miller, *Jests*, 1789.

my lord, is *Hogg*; your lordship's is *Bacon*; and all the world will allow that bacon and hog are very closely allied."

"I am sorry," replied his lordship, "I cannot admit the truth of your instance; hog cannot be bacon till it is hung; and so, before I can admit your plea, or acknowledge the family compact, Hogg must be hanged to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER VI

IN THE PULPIT

A BLACKSMITH, having been ordered to make a railing for the steps of a pulpit, ornamented it with wolves' heads, and when asked the reason, said: "I thought it might prevent asses from venturing up."

Jonathan Edwards says, "Make men weep, if you can; but if you cannot make them weep, make them smile"; and that because the founts of mirth and grief lie close together, as we see so plainly in the case of an hysterical woman who laughs and cries alternately.

There was once an ambitious preacher who occasionally officiated at the Chapel Royal at Versailles, and who boasted that he could deliver a sermon "off-hand" on any text which was placed before him on the pulpit cushion. His rash challenge was accepted, and when, on the succeeding Sunday, he entered the pulpit, he eagerly opened a small piece of paper, which lay before him, neatly folded up. He quickly unfolded it, but it was perfectly blank;—no line, no word! But the ready wit of the young Frenchman came to his help. "Here is nothing, nothing; yet out of nothing God created all things"; and from the text he preached an excellent sermon on the creative power of God.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon, on being asked if he felt nervous when preaching before Queen Victoria, replied: "I never address the queen at all." "I know there will be present the queen, the princes, the household, and the servants, down to the scullery-maid, and I preach to the scullery-maid."

Mark Twain said to a bishop that he had heard every word of his sermon before. "Surely not," said the preacher; "I assure you it was quite original." "But I will send you a book containing every word of the discourse," insisted Mark Twain. The bishop was greatly annoyed, but became somewhat comforted when the book arrived and proved to be a dictionary.

The vicar of a West End church, giving out the notices for Lent, said: "The special preachers during this solemn season of the year will be found hanging in the porch, as you leave the church."

A dear old lady, after hearing a very promising young curate preach, encouraged him with the remark: "Lor', sir, I do like to 'ear you preach extrumpety; your language is that wonderfully fluid."

The following story is told at the expense of written sermons:—

One Monday morning a rector called on one of his old parishioners, and, after telling the good dame how pleased he had been to see her at church, he said:

"And what did you think of the sermon, Bridget?"

"Very good, very good," she answered.

"And the text, Bridget?"

“ Ah ! it was my favourite ! ”

“ And how much of the sermon did you carry away ? ” asked the rector.

The old woman confessed that not much had remained in her mind.

“ Not much ! ” repeated the parson, in a disappointed tone. “ Why, Bridget, that sermon took me hours to compose. ”

“ Ah, your reverence, why should you expect a poor old body like me to bear it in mind when you couldn't remember it yourself ? ”

For some unknown reason the habit of looking out a preacher's text in the Bible is associated with the Evangelical party.

An archdeacon, prefacing his sermon by a text when preaching in a cathedral, chanced to look down on to the stalls, and noticed a canon fumbling the leaves of his Bible, and putting his hand to his ear to catch chapter and verse. The preacher, in a subdued voice, was heard to say to his co-cleric in the Chapter: “ Really, canon, can't you believe me without verifying it ? ”

There are four different kinds of hearers of the Word ; those like a sponge, that suck up good and bad together, then let both run out immediately.

Those like a sandglass, that let whatever enters in at one ear, pass out at the other : hearing without thinking.

Those like a strainer, letting go the good, and retain-

ing the bad ; and those like a sieve, letting go the chaff, and retaining the good grain.

Whitefield, the great preacher, was noted for the wonderful manner in which he caused his hearers to realise the scenes and truths which he described. His dramatic power, coupled with his intense earnestness, assured them that he dealt with facts of eternal importance. He was fond of quoting the following story :—

Garrick, the actor, whilst walking in the Strand, met the then Bishop of London, who questioned him concerning his art.

“How is it,” the cleric inquired, “that you actors are able, on the stage, to produce so great an effect with fiction ; whilst we preachers, in the pulpit, obtain such a small result with facts ?”

“Why, my lord,” replied Garrick, “I suppose it is because we present fiction as though it were fact, whilst you, too often, offer facts as though they were but fiction !”

The same has been thus paraphrased :

“You, in the pulpit, tell a story,
We, on the stage, show facts.”

Mr. Spurgeon once asked a student for the ministry to preach an impromptu sermon on Zacchæus, with the following result :—

“First, Zacchæus was a man of small stature ; so am I. Second, Zacchæus was very much up a tree ; so am I. Third, Zacchæus made haste and came down ; so will I,” and at once resumed his seat. “Go on,”

shouted the fellow-students, "Go on." "No," said Mr. Spurgeon, "he could not improve upon that if he tried ever so much."

Hugh Peters, the jocular preacher and court chaplain under Cromwell, holding forth one day on the neglect of duty of which Christians were too often guilty, made the following remarks: "My beloved, observe, there are three fools in the Gospel; for, being bid to the wedding-supper, every one had his excuse. The first had hired a farm, and must go to see it. 'Had not he been a fool, he would have seen it before he bought it. The second had purchased a yoke of oxen, and he must go and try them. He also was a fool, because he did not try them before he bought them. The third had just been married, and without any compliment said plainly he could not come. He was a fool, too, for by this he showed that one woman drew him away more than a yoke of oxen did the farmer."

It is told of a grandson of the famous James Bonnar, a Scotch divine of great repute in Fife, that he observed, with some annoyance, many of the congregation nodding and sleeping in their pews whilst he was preaching. He took his measure accordingly, and introduced the word "hyperbolical" into his sermon; but he paused and said: "Now, my friends, some of you may not understand the word 'hyperbolical'; I'll explain it. Suppose that I were to say that this congregation were *all* asleep in this church at the present time, I would be speaking hyperbolically, because (looking round) I don't believe much more

than one-half of you are sleeping." The effect was instantaneous, and those who were nodding recovered themselves, and nudged their sleeping neighbours, and the preacher went on as if nothing had happened.¹

I have heard tell of an illiterate but clever Methodist preacher. He gave out his text—"I can do all things." He then paused, and looking at the Bible keenly, said, in his own native Somersetshire dialect: "What's that thee says, Paul?—'I can do all things,' I'll bet thee-half-a-crown o' that." So he took half-a-crown out of his big pocket, and put it on the Book. "However," he added, "let's see what the Apostle has to say for himself." So he read on the next words, "through Christ that strengtheneth me." "Oh!" says he, "if that's the terms of the bet, I'm off." And he put the half-crown into his pocket again, and proceeded with his sermon.¹

A thoughtful man being asked, "What is the effect of Bishop Fraser's preaching on you?" "The general effect," he replied, "is, that I go from church resolving to try and *practise* in my life what he preaches."

When I was in for priest's orders the Bishop of Ripon, Dr. Boyd Carpenter, gave an afternoon's instruction to the candidates on the subject of preaching. His lordship gave his hearers an opportunity of asking questions, and a deacon said: "My lord, it has been my habit during my diaconate, after deciding upon a text, to open all my commentaries on the passage, to see what has been written upon it by the

¹ Dean Ramsay's *Pulpit Table-Talk*.

greatest theologians; and thus to compose my sermon. Do you recommend me to continue such a method?"

To which the bishop replied: "I must warn you that such a method requires the utmost care, or your sermon may resemble a patchwork quilt, or in a more scriptural phrase 'a coat of many colours.' Take an illustration from a coffee mill. Suppose you place a number of coffee berries in the mill, they will be disintegrated units with no cohesion,—so your berries of thoughts; but turn the handle of originality, open the drawer, and then use the blend! Don't forget the handle of originality when dealing with other men's thoughts."

Another deacon said: "My lord, I have been in the habit, before selecting a text, of consulting a book of skeleton sermons. Do you advise me to use such outlines?" "To your question I would say," replied the bishop, "imagine, in a paddock, there is the skeleton of a horse in a standing position, and you wish to clothe it with the skin of another steed; I venture to think that there might be a misfit. Be careful, therefore, that the congregation do not have cause to detect a misfit in your discourse, and discern an ass's skin clothing a lion's skeleton. Be yourself!"

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who once said: "Gentlemen, I cannot hear what you say for listening to what you are." That is very often the case. Speech is constantly discounted by conduct, and profession is cancelled by the contradictory character that lies behind it.

Three reasons which a good woman gave for objecting to a preacher. In the first place, he read his sermon; in the second, he did not read it well; and in the third place, it was not worth reading.

"A preacher," exclaimed Archbishop Whateley, "should ask himself, 'Am I about to preach because I want to say *something*, or because I have something to say?'"

Archbishop Magee, the greatest orator of his day—no bad judge of preaching—once said, "There are three kinds of preachers. First, the preacher you cannot listen to; second, the preacher you can listen to; and, the third, the preacher you cannot help listening to."

An eloquent preacher made the following rule when working out a sermon:—

"Insert everything that ought to be put in;

Omit everything that ought to be left out."

It is said that in a certain tribe of savages a man is allowed to speak at their councils only so long as he can stand on one foot. When the other foot touches the ground his time is up.

"For a friend who was ill, and unable to teach,
Through the pitiless storm rode old Spintext to preach:
'I lament you're so *wet*,' said the sick with a sigh,
'But get into the pulpit, and—there you'll be dry!'"

A preacher once gave the following illustration to show that a soft answer often turns away wrath:—

"Watch, a splendid house-dog, was aroused from his

slumbers by the appearance of an organ-grinder and his monkey, and instantly sprang up to repel the strangers. The sight of the monkey infuriated the dog, and he would have torn it to pieces, had not the well-trained monkey, taking off his hat, made him a profound bow, which made such an impression on Watch, that he slunk away cowed; an emblem of the bad man's embarrassment, when he is confronted by a truly gentlemanly spirit."

Bishop Blomfield of London used to tell a story of his having been once, late in life, at the University Church at Cambridge, and having seen a verger there whom he remembered when he was himself an undergraduate. The bishop said he was glad to see him looking so well at such a great age. "Oh yes, my lord," said the official, "I have much to be grateful for. I have heard every sermon which has been preached in this church for fifty years, and, thank God, I am a Christian still."

An instance of a long-winded preacher pandering to his congregation is illustrated in the frontispiece of the life of Hugh Peters, about 1660. Peters is depicted in the pulpit in the act of inverting an hour-glass, and saying to the congregation dressed in Cromwellian costume:

"I know you are good fellows, stay and take the other glass," which, being brought up to date in colloquial English, would be—

"I know you are jolly fellows, stay a little longer, and so let us have one glass more together."

A tedious clergyman who, after dealing at great length in a sermon with the major prophets and the minor prophets, seemed to be coming to an end, when he added, "And now we come to Jeremiah. What place, I ask you, shall Jeremiah have?" An old man at the back of the room shouted, "Oh, Jeremiah can have my place. I'm going home."¹

During the General Election of 1892 I heard an old labourer on a village green denouncing the evils of an Established Church.

"I'll tell you how it is with one of these 'ere State parsons. If you take away his book, he can't preach; and if you take away his gown, he mustn't preach; and if you take away his fat living, of which he obtains by the sweat of *our* brow, he'll be blowed if he'll preach!"²

The *Berkshire Chronicle* states that in some circulars sent round by the Bishop of Oxford to different parishes was the inquiry: "Does your officiating clergyman preach the Gospel, and are his conversation and carriage consistent therewith?" To which a churchwarden, about four miles from Wallingford, wrote in answer, "He preaches the Gospel; but does not keep a carriage."

¹ *May I Tell you a Story*, by Helen Mar.

² *Collections and Recollections*.

CHAPTER VII

THE OFFERTORY BAG

WOULD it be possible to put ready wit to greater advantage than was done in the following instance?

A bishop went to preach on behalf of a special charity in a country church.

"I am indeed grieved that your lordship has such a breezy, blowy day on which to come here," said the vicar. "Tuts!" replied the prelate cheerily, "what did I come here for, but to raise the wind?"

Dean Swift once preached a charity sermon at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the length of his discourse disgusted many of his hearers, which coming to his knowledge, and it falling to his lot soon after to preach another sermon of the like kind, in the same place, he took special care to avoid falling into the same error.

His text was—"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he has given, will He pay him again." The dean, after repeating his text in a more than commonly emphatic tone, added, "Now, my beloved brethren, you hear the terms of the loan. If you like the security, down with your dust."

It is worthy of remark that the quaintness and brevity of this sermon provided a very large offertory.

On one occasion Bishop Samuel Wilberforce was trying to move the generosity of a wealthy but niggardly magnate to get him to subscribe to the diocesan funds. The rich but stingy person, in answer to his appeal, said: "I shall be happy to give my mite." "I always thought that there were two, and they represented the widow's all," quickly retorted the bishop.

A. K. H. B., writing of a visit which he paid to Glamis Castle, says: "During the morning the Earl of Strathmore on being asked about the haunted room, his lordship treated the subject most scientifically. He told me that some years before, a dignitary, who was always collecting for church building, had just gone to bed, when of a sudden the ghost appeared: apparently a Strathmore of some centuries back. With great presence of mind the cleric had the first word. Addressing the ghost he said he was most anxious to raise money for a church he was erecting: that he had a bad cold, and could not well get out of bed: but that his collecting book was on his dressing-table, and he would be extremely obliged if his visitor would give him a subscription. Before this the ghost vanished, and has never come back any more."¹

Two brothers went up from a small village in Scotland to see the sights of London, and when the Sabbath came round they entered Westminster Abbey some time in advance of the hour of service. Taking up a prayer-book which lay in the pew, the elder

¹ *Twenty-five Years at St. Andrews.*

brother examined it page after page with evident curiosity. At last he laid down the book, and shaking his head, said: "Come awa oot, Sandy, man; the service is just collect, collect, collect, frae end to end. It's no' the kirk for puir bodies like oursels."

A Fife laird put a crown into the plate by mistake and, on discovering the error, proceeded to the elder to get back the money. "Na, na," said the worthy pillar of the kirk; "ye may put in what ye like, but ye maun tak' naething oot." "Aweel, aweel," said the laird, "I'll get credit in heaven for the crown." "Deil a bit," replied the elder; "ye'll juist get credit for the penny."

When Erskine heard that somebody had died worth two hundred thousand pounds, he observed, "Well, that's a very pretty sum to begin the next world with."

Thomas Hood relates the following story of a very rich man of his day:—

"At charity meetings he always volunteered to go round with the hat, but was suspected of sparing his own pocket. Overhearing one day a hint to that effect, he made the following speech:—'Other gentlemen put down what they think proper, and so does I. Charity's a private concern, and what I gives is *nothing to nobody*.'"

To all letters soliciting subscriptions, Lord Erskine had a regular form of reply, namely: "Sir, I feel much honoured by your application to me, and beg to *subscribe*" (here the reader had to turn overleaf) "myself, your very obedient servant," etc.

In the French Academy the hat went round in aid of the family of a deceased member. The curé of Notre Dame held the hat, and began with the president, the Archbishop of Paris, who was notorious as a crusty customer. The curé, finishing his circuit, presented, by mistake, the hat a second time to the president, and received for answer: "Monsieur, I gave my donation before; you may believe it—Monsieur La Fontaine here saw it." "Yes," cried the poet, "I saw it, my lord, but did not believe it!"

A bishop told Dean Hole that a collector in a church on receiving a shake of the head instead of a dollar from the hand of one whom he knew intimately, stopped to remonstrate, and said: "William, you must give something. You've heard what the rector has said—it's your duty." "My money belongs to my creditors," said William. "And who is your greatest creditor? To whom do you owe the most?"

History relates how Lady Cork was so deeply impressed by a sermon, soliciting pecuniary help, that she borrowed a sovereign from Sydney Smith, who sat next to her, but could not make up her mind to put it into the plate or to repay Smith.

A farmer once went to hear John Wesley preach. The preacher said he would take up three topics of thought, he was talking chiefly about money. His first head was, "*Get all you can.*" The farmer nudged his neighbour, and said: "That man has got something in him; it is admirable preaching." Wesley reached his

second division, "*Save all you can.*" The farmer became quite excited, "Was there ever anything like this?" he said. The preacher denounced thriftlessness and waste, and the farmer rubbed his hands as he thought, "And all this I have been from my youth up." What with getting and with hoarding, it seemed to him that "salvation" had come to his house. But Wesley went on to his third head, which was, "*Give all you can.*" "Oh, dear! he has gone and spoilt it all," exclaimed the farmer. But getting, without giving, makes only stagnant pools of us.¹

A preacher, pleading for a charitable institution, was wonderfully struck whilst occupying the pulpit by the apparently well-to-do appearance of the congregation. Afterwards, when his eye wandered over the small coins on the vestry table being counted by the wardens, his heart went forth in deepest sympathy towards the congregation in its poverty.

Dr. Andrews of Canterbury disliked the nicety which a few of his wealthy parishioners displayed, when applied to for their assistance in aid of private charity. "I am sorry," he said, "that my own means do not enable me to do that which my heart dictates. I had rather be deceived in ten instances than lose the opportunity of making one heart glad."

A churchwarden was taking round the offertory bag during the singing of a missionary hymn, after an eloquent sermon had been delivered on the subject of missions to the heathen. He arrived at the pew of a

¹ Dr. Bank's, *Windows for Sermons.*

certain gentleman visitor, who promptly said to the warden: "I never give to missions on principle." "Well," said the warden as he handed him the bag, "help yourself to some of the money: it is intended for the heathen, and you are evidently one of them."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TOAST, FLOWING BOWL, AND PIPE OF PEACE.

"What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice of Attic taste?"
—MILTON.

THE practice of drinking healths is as old as the hills. The Greeks drank to one another, and the Romans adopted the custom. Several references can be found in Shakespeare, of which we give the following two instances:—

"Health and wish of health
Come, love and health to all."

"I drink to the general joy of the whole table,
And to our dear friend, Banquo."

The "toast" is thoroughly English, and appears to have originated about the seventeenth century, during the days of the Stuarts.

In Weyther's *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, published 1613, mention is made of a draught "that must be spiced with a nut-browne tost." And Rochester, when instructing Vulcan how to make him a drinking-cup, says:

"Make it so large, that filled with sack
Up to the flowing brim,
Vast toasts, in the delicious lake,
Like ships at sea, may swim."

It is evident that about the Stuart period the fashionable drink was either sack or punch, and, to add a flavour to the wine, pieces of toasted bread were allowed to float on the surface, and the following story will show how the health became ideally connected with a lady:—

In a book, entitled *The Toastmaster*, dated 1701, referred to in the *Tatler* of 2nd June 1709, we read:

“Many of the wits of the last age will assert that the word (Toast) in its present sense was known among them in their youth, and had its rise from an accident at Bath, in the reign of King Charles the Second. (It was customary for ladies to bathe publicly, attired in smart gowns, made for the purpose.)

“It happened that, on a public day, a celebrated beauty of those times was in the Cross Bath, and one of the crowd of her admirers took a glass of the water, in which the fair one stood, and drank her health to the company. There was in the place a gay fellow, half-fuddled, who offered to jump in, and swore: ‘Tho’ he liked not the liquor, he would have the toast’ (making allusion to the fashion of putting toast in wine). He was opposed in his resolution, yet this whim gave foundation to the present honour, which is done to the lady we mention in our liquors; who has ever since been called a ‘toast.’”

Dr. Browne, chaplain to the Bishop of Hereford, dining one day with his lordship, in company with a young lady to whom he paid his addresses, was asked for his toast after dinner, when the bishop, perceiving him

to hesitate, cried: "Oh, I beg your pardon, doctor, your toast is not yet *Browne*.'" ¹

Librarian Hew Morrison, LL.D., of Edinburgh Central Library, kindly furnishes me with the following:—

"I do not know that the origin of drinking a toast with Highland honours, can now be clearly set forth. The meaning of it is very distinct. It is only used to honour the one particular toast. I believe that in the Highlands of Scotland, where it is supposed it had its origin, the toast is not drunk with their one foot on the chair and the other on the table, but simply quaffed off amid cries of 'Suas E,' 'Suas E,' 'Suas E,' which means 'Up with it,' 'Up with it,' 'Up with it.' It was then the custom that, when the chief's health was proposed on the occasion of his marriage or accession, the contents of the glass were not only quaffed off, but the glass itself was thrown over the heads of those drinking it; thus conveying the idea that as this toast had been drunk out of it, no less worthy one should ever pollute it.

"By degrees the toast underwent a change, till finally it has reached its present stage.

"I do not know what is meant really by the Grace cup. I have seen at a meal in the Highlands of Scotland the whisky bottle sent round immediately before a blessing was asked, each one having a little poured out for him, but it certainly was not drunk until the grace was said. I do not know whether this had anything to do with the grace cup or not."

¹ *Wils Museum*, 1780.

For the history surrounding the "Loving-Cup," which we have taken part in, when enjoying the hospitality of the Lord Mayor and City Companies of London, one must go back to the ages when dark deeds were perpetrated under the guise of friendship. Let us call to mind the quaint scene. Each partaker of the banquet in turn rises and bows to him who is seated on the right, who also rises. He first removes the cover of the cup with his right hand, to show that he holds no dagger, then partakes himself of the wine, to prove it is free from poison. This done, he offers it to his neighbour, who repeats the actions.

The ceremony of toasting in three times three, observed at certain banquets, may perhaps be traced to the Greek practice of drinking to the nine Muses as three times three, in some of the rituals.

I am indebted to Dr. Hew Morrison for the following:—

"In regard to the 'Stirrup-Cup,' which in Gaelic is 'Deoch an Doruis,' literally meaning, 'The drink at the door.' It is applied to all, whether riders or footmen. Among the better class it got the name of Stirrup-Cup, because when the rider got fairly settled on his horse, the host held by his stirrup until he had drank what was proffered him. He was supposed to drink success and happiness to the house from which he was taking his departure.

"It was a common practice in the Highlands, and is still, for the entrant to a house to wish 'God's blessing on this house,' as he entered it. This he addressed to

the person who admitted him, as he crossed the threshold, and on leaving addressed his host, if he accompanied him to the door, by Gaelic words, 'Beannach Leibh,' meaning, 'My blessing I leave with thee,' or if he were to be away for some time he simply said, 'Sorradh Leibh,' i.e. 'Farewell.'"

S. F. Donaldson, Esq., librarian of Inverness, has kindly supplied me with these two explanations.

"Various meanings are given by authorities to the toast called 'Highland honours.' For instance it proclaims to the host that they have come unarmed and have no weapons concealed in their stockings or otherwise. Another, reasons in this way. That much as the Highlanders appreciate the host for the good things provided for them at the table, they honour him far above and beyond these material things."

I once heard on good authority that Disraeli, meeting Matthew Arnold at dinner, held a glass of Madeira up to the lamp, and said to him, with a touch of irony, "Mr. Arnold, sweetness and light!"¹

A well-known orator was to make an after-dinner speech at a public function. Whilst conversation was going on, the toast master (or master of ceremonies) approached him, saying *sotto voce*: "Would you like to speak now, sir, or shall we let the company enjoy themselves a little longer?"

Here are two good thoughts for an after-dinner speech. For the first we are indebted to Lord Morley.

¹ *Nuts and Chestnuts*, by the Hon. L. A. Tollemache. Published by Edward Arnold (by permission).

"A medical congress at Brighton the other day decided that nothing is more injurious than sea-bathing after a full meal. Surely making speeches after a full meal is just as bad, and for my own part, after enormous experience, I suspect that the strain of listening in the same circumstances is even more anti-hygienic than speaking."

The second we owe to Lord Halsbury, who, at a Public Schools Alpine Sports Club dinner, said something to this effect: "A French friend once said to me, 'The great thing that you English seem to thoroughly enjoy is a banquet, when you delight to make one guest utterly miserable by having to give a speech, and to bore all the rest by having to listen.'"

Samuel Rogers gave a dinner, and had the room decorated with candles, placed high up in order to show off the pictures. At dinner he asked Sidney Smith how he liked the plan. "Not at all," he replied, "above there is a blaze of light, and below nothing but darkness and gnashing of teeth."

A gentleman, who had the gift of shaping a great many things out of orange peel, was displaying his abilities at a dinner party before Theodore Hook, and succeeded in cutting out a pig, to the admiration of the host. Mr. Hook tried the same feat, and after strewing the table with the peel of many oranges, gave it up, exclaiming, "Bother the pig, I can't make him!" "Nay," rejoined a guest, glancing at a mess on the table, "you have done more; instead of one pig, you have made a litter."

Miss Brassie spilled a glass of wine when she was eight years old; the Rev. J. A. Giles was sitting next to her, and observed that it was an *unladylike* thing. "Not so *unladylike*," replied she, "to spill the wine, as it is *ungentlemanlike* in you to tell me of it."¹

"This bread of yours, my dear, is a contradiction of the laws of gravity." "Indeed?" "Yes, it's as heavy as lead, but it won't go down."

Some gentleman wrote to Mr. Spurgeon, saying "he had heard he smoked, and could not believe it true. Would Mr. Spurgeon write and tell him if it really was so." The reply sent was as follows:—

"Dear —, I cultivate my flowers and burn my weeds. Yours, —."

The Bishop of — had an inveterate dislike to tobacco-smoke, and it was well-known to all ordination candidates at the palace that the weed was tabooed. A candidate, who had contracted the habit of smoking at Oxford, denied himself his greatest pleasure till after the result of the examination was announced. Then, having been told that he had passed, could no longer resist indulging in the fragrant weed. So, retiring for the night, he opened his bedroom window, lit a cigar, and puffed to his heart's content into space. He then slept the sleep of the just. Next morning the bishop wished to speak to Mr. —. "Last night you slept in the room immediately below mine. My wife and I awoke choking to find our room filled with smoke, and I at first feared the palace was on fire. Let this be a

¹ 1835.

warning in future always to regard the wishes of your host and hostess."

An old acquaintance of one who had lately been called to the episcopal bench, came unexpectedly upon his friend enjoying a quiet puff or two. "Ah, my lord, at your idol again?" "Yes, but you see I am burning it."

During an ordination week held by a bishop, who greatly disliked tobacco smoke, a successful candidate, dying to soothe his tired brain and overstrung nerves, braced himself up to ask the "eye of the bishop," if there was no spot where he might have a pipe of peace. "None," replied the archdeacon, "unless you put your head and half your body up the chimney!"

The word "teetotal" is said to have originated in the following way:—

In September 1833, a certain Richard Turner, or, as he was more generally called, "Dicky Turner," a plasterer's labourer, or *lime-larry*, who was much given to holding forth in the Lancashire dialect at the meetings of the new sect, happened, in the course of a philippic against temperance, to say: "I'll hev nowt to do wi' this moderation—*botheration*—pledge; I'll be teet down tee-tee-total for ever and ever!" "Well done, Dicky!" said Mr. Livesay, "that shall be the name of our new pledge" (Burne's *Teetotaller's Companion*). Thus a stuttering pronunciation was the beginning of a word which has since become recognised and widely used.

A clergyman at a Band of Hope gathering asked the children to turn to the hymn, "Little drops of water." The superintendent, on being dissatisfied with the dead-and-alive singing of the boys and girls, repeated the first line, "Little drops of water. . . . Now, please, put some spirit into it."

Doctor : "Well, my little man, and how is your father to-day ? Is his appetite good ?"

Small son of the house : "I don't know about his appetite, sir, but his drinkatite's as good as ever !"

A person asked a Grecian philosopher what he thought was the proper time to dine ?

"Sir !" said the ancient, "the proper time of dinner with the opulent is when they choose ; with the poor man when he can."

Happy, again, as an example of the fundamental incongruity between the ideas associated in a "bull" is the retort of a thirsty car-driver to his English fare, who had just refreshed him at a roadside public-house. "Well, has that made another man of you ?" said the traveller. "Faith it has, sir," replied the jarvey ; "an' he's dry, too."

To the saying, "Eat and leave off hungry !" has been retorted, "Why not wash and leave off dirty ?"

"I have no quarrel individually with the rum sellers, neither have I with those little insects which are fine entomological specimens exquisitely constructed, and beautiful as specimens of creative power, with a jump-

ing energy forty times greater than mine; but I do object, in both cases, *to the way they get their living!*"¹

"Now, I mean not to drink one drop of wine to-day," Sydney Smith used at times to say, "and I shall be mad with good spirits. I always am when I drink no wine."

Cardinal Manning used to tell this story. "One night I was returning to my house in Westminster, when I met a poor man, carrying a basket and smoking a pipe. I thought over this Aristotelian syllogism, 'He who smokes gets thirsty; he who is thirsty desires to drink; he who drinks too much gets drunk; he who gets drunk is lost!' This man is in danger of mortal sin, let me try to save him. I affectionately addressed him: 'Are you a Roman Catholic?' 'I am, thank Heaven!' 'Where are you from?' 'From Cork, your riverence.' 'Are you a member of our Total Abstinence Society—The League of the Cross?' 'No, yer riverence.' "Now," said I, "that is very wrong. Look at me, I'm a member." 'Faith, may be yer riverence has need of it,' replied the man."

At a great temperance meeting at Manchester, Bishop Fraser said that "a man was more than a pair of legs to carry a body turned into a beer-barrel."

A congressman who had been imbibing a little too freely on one occasion, went up to Horace Greeley, and in an arrogant manner said: "You must give me the credit of being a self-made man." To which Greeley

¹ J. Ellis.

replied that he was "glad to hear it, for," said he, "that relieves God of a great responsibility."

An eloquent teetotal lecturer was giving a soul-stirring address, and to drive his point home assured his hearers that alcohol was a deadly poison. Then, asking for a glass of water, he provided a phial containing whisky from his pocket, and dropping a little into the water, asked the audience to closely observe the effect, which would be to precipitate all the microbes to the bottom. Whereupon an old lady exclaimed in an excited voice, "Well, I'm sure! I shall persuade all my friends never to drink water again from the village pump, without first diluting it with a wee drop of the crature."

Queen Victoria purified wit as well as many other things about the court. It is said that during the early part of her reign a gentleman, sitting at the royal table, was telling a doubtful story in subdued tones to those immediately around him, thereby causing a considerable amount of laughter. The Queen requested him to relate the story to her. He excused himself on the grounds that it was not worthy of her notice; but her gracious Majesty commanded him to repeat it, and he was obliged to do so; whereupon the Queen turning to him said, "We are not at all amused."

It seems to have been providential that Shakespeare did not live a hundred years later than he actually did, for at the later date humour became so grossly immoral that, had his writings been imbued with the spirit of

the period, they would, humanly speaking, have been unfit for extensive circulation.

An archdeacon, who had married a lady twenty years his senior, when dining out with her one night was asked his name by his host's butler. He replied: "The Venerable Archdeacon—and Mrs. B——." The butler duly announced: "Archdeacon and the Venerable Mrs. B."

One of our best known novelists, the most sensitively courteous of men, arriving very late at a dinner party, was overcome with confusion. "I am truly sorry to be so shockingly late." The genial hostess, only meaning to assure him that he was still welcome, emphatically replied: "Oh, Mr. —, you can't come too late."

A lady, having a reputation for being over-economical in her housekeeping, observed to a guest whom she was entertaining that Mr. Gladstone did a great deal of good by reducing the tax on tea. "He would have done a great deal more good," was the gentleman's reply, "if he had put on water what he had taken off tea."

"My dear boy," said a fond mother, "never defer till to-morrow what you can do to-day." "Then, mother," replied the boy, "let's eat the plum pudding to-night."

"Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey," so runs a Dutch proverb.

The following is Robert Burns' well-known grace:—

"Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be thankit."

AN OLD GRACE.

"What God gives, and what we take,
"Tis a gift for Christ His sake ;
Be the meal of beans and pease,
God be thanked for those and these :
Have we flesh, or have we fish,
All are fragments from His dish :
He, His Church save, and the King ;
And our Peace here, like a spring,
Make it ever flourishing."¹

CONVERSATION.

"Conversation is but carving :
Give no more to every guest
Than he's able to digest ;
Give him always of the prime,
And but little at a time ;
Give to all but just enough,
Let them neither starve nor stuff,
And that each may have his due,
Let your neighbour carve for you."²

¹ R. Herrick, 1662.

² Walter Scott.

CHAPTER IX

TRAVELLERS' YARNS

THE traveller's yarn is always interesting. Several of the following stories I first heard in the Mediterranean and in Egypt.

Three phases of sea-sickness.

1. I think I am going to die.
2. I know I am going to die.
3. I fear I am *not going to die*.

An Englishman and a Frenchman shared a cabin. The former occupied the upper berth and the latter the lower one. The Englishman feeling sick shouted to the Frenchman: "Look out!" To which the Frenchman replied in broken English: "What funny people you English are: why, when you say 'look out!' you really mean 'look in!'"

An Englishman said to an American who had been very sick: "You have been ill, I fear?" "Ill," replied the Yankee, "why, friend, ill is not the word: I have got rid of everything in my nature save original sin."

The Dean of the Chapel Royal, Dublin, having received a command to attend a Royal Commission in London, obeyed, and, on arriving at Westminster, was considerably asked by an Irish peer what sort of

a voyage he had experienced. "Don't mention it, for it was so bad that it almost caused me to throw up the Royal Commission!"

An Englishman who had just landed in China entered a restaurant to appease the pangs of hunger. Unfortunately he knew no Chinese and the waiter knew no English. So they were both thrown on mother wit. John Chinaman articulated "Bow-wow," to which John Bull moved his head from right to left. Then the waiter said "Quack, quack!" to which the customer moved his head from sky to earth, and the inner man was more than satisfied.

A year or two before his death the Dean and Mrs. Hole landed at Dover, much exhausted after a rough passage. While waiting for the train, the dean amused himself by reading the railway regulations.

"Ah!" said he, addressing the station inspector, "it's a consolation after the rough crossing and this tiresome wait to find that we go back half-price."

"I don't understand you, sir," replied the bewildered official; "we are not making any reduction in the fare."

"I thought you would to us," said the dean, with a merry twinkle, as he pointed to the notice board, "because you state that *returned empties* go at a much reduced rate."

This is from the life of Charles Keene.

"Got a story to-day of a British farmer on board a steamer, suffering a good deal from the rolling, saying to a friend, 'This capt'n don't understand his business. Bother it, why don't he keep in the furrows?'"

A philosopher and a wit were crossing the Irish Channel when, a high gale arising, the philosopher seemed under great apprehension lest he should go to the bottom.

"Why," said his friend, "that will suit your genius to a nicety; as for my part, I am only for skimming the surface of things."

The Metropolitan motor-buses are invariably too well patronised to be comfortable.

On a recent occasion, a gentleman occupying a corner seat noticed a middle-aged lady of considerable obesity standing in the doorway and unable to find any room. Asking his fellow-travellers to sit closer, he took off his hat, and rose, politely saying: "I can assure you, lady, that with all our efforts to oblige you there is little for you to sit upon."

"Please don't apologise," answered she, "for I am sure there is plenty to sit upon, but no room in which to put it."

On one of the morning city-trains the door of a carriage was opened at Willesden by a ticket collector who called out "Tickets, please." A passenger began to fumble in all his pockets until the official said, "Why, you have the end of your ticket in your mouth all the time." And so he had, and gave it up with an apology. After the door was closed one of his fellow-passengers ventured to remark, "A case of absent-mindedness!" "Ah, dear no, just the reverse; for I recollected the ticket expired yesterday, and I was chewing off the date!"

On another occasion a season ticket-holder on being asked to show his ticket, indignantly replied: "I have travelled on this line for years, my face is my passport." "Then!" said the official, "I have strict orders to punch it."

A cabman in a country town said to a deacon who tendered the fare in several small coins: "So you have evidently been saving up for this little treat "Ah! you recognise the threepenny bits, do you?" retorted the church officer.

Sydney Smith's wit, it is stated by his biographer, "is always fresh; you find the dew still on it."

"Nothing amuses me," said Canon Sydney Smith, "more than to observe the utter want of perception of a joke in some minds. Mrs. — called the other day, and spoke of the oppressive heat of last week. 'Heat, ma'am!' I said, 'it was so dreadful here that I found there was nothing left for it but to take off my flesh and sit in my bones.' 'Sir! oh how could you do that?' she exclaimed, with the utmost gravity. 'Nothing more easy, ma'am; come and see next time.' But she ordered her carriage, and evidently thought it a very unorthodox proceeding."

An old country-woman going to town by train, stepped into a first-class carriage with her basket and made herself nice and comfortable. Then a porter came along and said: "Are you first-class, my good woman?" "Begorra I am, an' thank you," she replied, "an how do you feel yerself?"

CHAPTER X

JOHN BULL, SANDY, AND PAT

THIS story is at least two centuries old, and makes it very evident that the Yorkshireman's proverbial shrewdness in business is inherited and has not been acquired through the commercial activities of modern times. A gentleman coming to an inn in London asked the very polite ostler how long he had lived there, and what part of the country he came from. "I'm Yorkshire," said the fellow, "and have lived sixteen years here." "I wonder," replied the gentleman, "that, in so long a time, so clever a fellow as you seem to be, has not come to be master of the inn." "Ay," answered the ostler, "but maister's Yorkshire too."

Voltaire used to say that the population of England is like her ale: "At the top there is nothing but froth, and at the bottom there is nothing but dregs; but between these extremes all is excellent."

Three men, whose respective nationalities might be represented by the rose, the shamrock, and the thistle, were looking at the pictures in a shop window, and discussing the appearance of a young lady behind the counter.

"That is a fine pretty girl," said the Englishman.

"Yes, indeed," said the Irishman; "let us go in and buy something in order to get a word with her."

"Hoot, mon," said the Scotsman, "nae occasion to waste siller; let's gang in and speer if she can gie us twa saxpences for a shilling."

An Irishman had been taken in charge by the police of Dublin's fair city for riding a horse that had been stolen from a neighbouring village. The judge reminded him that horse-stealing was a very serious 'charge, and the evidence against him appeared conclusive since he was in possession of the stolen property. Before sentence was passed the accused was asked if he had anything to say in his defence.

"Well, you see, my lord, on that particular night I was crossing the field to go to my cabin when I found this horse right in my path. I was afraid of going past his hind legs lest he should kick me, and afraid of passing his head lest he should bite me; so, as I was stepping over the middle of the beast, he got up and bolted with me on his back." "You need not go any further," said the judge. "You have proved your innocence and are acquitted without a stain on your character."

When engaged one evening in a disquisition on the difference between the Irish and Scottish Celts, Dr. Whately gave a pleasant fillip to the conversation when it threatened to become dry, by suddenly asking, "What is the difference between an Irishman and a Scotsman on the top of a mountain in frosty weather?"

Receiving no answer, the archbishop continued, "One is *could* with the kilt, and the other *kilt* with the cowl!"

When Foote was in Edinburgh, a Scotsman, having taken him round the modern Athens, asked what he thought the most agreeable prospect in Scotland. "Why, to be plain with you," said Foote, "much the finest prospect you have is the road to England."

A Scotsman has been described thus: "A Scot is a man who keeps the Sawbath and everything else that he can get."

The following difference is said to be observed between an Englishman, a Scotsman, and an Irishman on leaving a railway carriage. John Bull looks round to see if he has left anything behind; Patrick absent-mindedly gets out without a thought for his worldly possessions; whilst Sandy first carefully examines the compartment to see if he has left anything in it, and then to see if any one else has done so.

Three men claiming respectively as their patron saint, St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick, had been brought in by a jury guilty of murder. The judge, addressing the prisoners, said that as the crime had been committed apparently under great provocation the court would show a special favour in allowing them to choose their own gallows. To which the Englishman replied he would be hanged on a stately English oak; while the Scot gave the preference to the tallest of Scotch firs. "Such patriotism," said the judge, "is most commendable." "And, sure, your lord-

ship, I will be hanged on a gooseberry bush," said the Irishman. "But, Pat," quoth the judge, "a gooseberry bush is not tall enough for such a fine fellow as you." "Ah well, my lord, being in no hurry, I can wait until it grows."

The following two stories have been culled from a delightful article on Irish humour that appeared in the *Times*, 17th March 1913:—

"In the House of Commons Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman related how the head of a family complained to three friends, an Englishman, a Scotsman, and an Irishman, that an awkward or careless servant was constantly breaking his china, and asked their advice as to what he should do with her. The practical Englishman said, 'Dismiss her.' 'Take it out of her wages,' said the thrifty Scot. The gentleman explained that the wages were less than the amount of damage. 'Then raise her wages,' said the Irishman."

"A member of the Royal Irish Constabulary, taking the agricultural statistics of a rural district, called at a farmer's house when the occupier was out, and was directed by one of the family—a young lad—where to find him. 'He's out in the paddock with the ass,' said the boy; 'you'll know father by his straw hat.'"

A distinguished Irish judge made the remark, "The Irishman doesn't know what he wants, and he won't be happy till he gets it."

A common witticism in the mouths of the Dublin car-drivers, when a person expresses preference for

walking, is, "Lord, save your honour, and may you always be able, and seldom willing!"

A lady who is a landowner in County Galway is in the habit of collecting her own rents. One day, when a tenant-farmer had pleaded long and unsuccessfully for an abatement, he exclaimed as he handed over his money, "Well, my lady, all I can say is that if I had my time over again, it's not a tenant-farmer I'd be. I'd follow one of the learned professions." The landowner gently replied that even in the learned professions there were losses as well as gains, and perhaps he would have found professional life as precarious as farming. "Ah, my lady! how can that be then?" replied the son of St. Patrick.

"If you're a lawyer,—win or lose, you're paid.

If you're a doctor,—kill or cure, you're paid.

If you're a priest,—heaven or hell, you're paid."

Travelling on one occasion between Dublin and Cork, just at the time when Mr. Parnell had got into bad odour over certain indiscretions, I overheard the following conversation:—

English tourist, sitting in the opposite corner of the carriage to a native of the soil: "Well, what are you going to do with Mr. Parnell?" To which Pat quietly replied, "Och, shure, we are going to lave him to God Almighty, and we feel sartain He will play the very devil with him."

In the west of Ireland an English tourist met a farmer driving some cattle to a local fair, and asked him how much he was likely to get for his stock.

"Four pounds a head," replied Pat. "Only four pounds a head! Why, if you brought them to my country, you would get at least six pounds each for them." "Och, maybe so, yer honour," rejoined the farmer, "an' if I bring the lakes of Killarney to purgatory, I'll get a thousand pounds a drop."

Theodore Hook told a story of a gentleman driving his Irish servant in his car, and saying to him, half jocularly, half in anger: "If the gallows had its due, you rascal, where would you be now?" "Faith then, your honour, it's riding in this car I'd be, all alone by myself, maybe!"

An Irishman, who was ill, went to London to consult an eminent specialist. The physician, having examined him, said, "I should like to know whether your family have been long-lived?" "Well, doctor, I'll just tell you how it is," replied the patient thoughtfully. "My family is a west of Ireland family, and the age of my ancestors depended entirely on the judge and jury who tried them."

Pat went up to the parish priest and told him with a long face that he had seen a ghost. "Where and when?" asked the priest. "Last night," replied the man, "I was passing by the church, and up against the wall of it did I behold the spectre." "In what shape did it appear?" "It appeared in the shape of a great ass." "Go home and hold your tongue about it," rejoined the priest. "You are a very timid man, and have been frightened by your own shadow."

A Dublin ecclesiastic one day missed his hat, and

having astutely peeped in to Plunkett Street, a famous mart for old clothes, he found a woman in the act of selling it. "I only wanted it as a relic of your reverence," she said. "You seem very anxious to get rid of it, then." "I was merely asking the value of it," rejoined the ready-witted crone.¹

There were two Irishmen who were working upon a house, one fell to the earth. His friend looked over the scaffold and cried, "Pat, are ye dead?" The reply was, "Not dead, but spacheless."

Two gentlemen, passing a blackberry bush when the fruit was unripe, one said it was ridiculous to call them *blackberries* when they were red. "Don't you know," said his friend, "that blackberries are always *red* when they are *green*?"

This story, which relates to an Englishman, a Scotsman, and an Irishman who were discussing the merits of their respective countries, is one which Lord Aberdeen is said to be fond of telling.

The Englishman said, "If I were not an Englishman I do believe I would like to be a Scotsman."

The Scotsman remarked that were he not a Scotsman he might possibly do worse than be an Englishman.

But the Irishman exclaimed, "If I were not an Irishman I would just be ashamed of myself!"

¹ *Memoirs of Father Healy.*

CHAPTER XI

PRETTY WIT

JUDGE KEOGH had a favourite daughter, Jessie. One day when Father Healy was going to dine with Keogh, he met in the avenue this young lady riding a donkey, which was led by her cousin. "Why is he led?" asked Healy. "Lest he should run away with me." "He'd be no ass to run away with you, Jessie."¹

One day Father Healy met two young ladies, one of them now Countess of Wicklow, ascending the hill on foot, and making fruitless efforts to urge on a reluctant ass harnessed to a miniature phaeton. They accosted the Father in their distress, saying, "Oh, Father Healy, we're so glad to meet you. *What shall* we do to make this beast proceed?" "Go before him," said he, "and he is a greater donkey than I take him to be if he do not follow you."¹

The great Oxonian, Henry Smith, on one occasion having to make a reference to young ladies gave utterance to an ornithological paradox: "We must remember that little ducks are sometimes also little geese."²

Smoking is very prevalent among old women in

¹ *Memoirs of Father Healy.*

² *Old and Odd Memories*, by the Hon. L. A. Tollemache, published by Messrs. Edward Arnold. (By permission.)

Ireland. They take to the habit as a solace in their declining years. I once asked an old woman at what time of her life she first began to indulge in tobacco. Her reply was, "I took to it as a bit of diversion after me poor old man was tucked under the daisies."

How charmingly did the poor woman reply to the gentleman who found her watering her webs of linen cloth. She could not tell him even the text of the last sermon. "And what good can the preaching do you, if you forget it all?" "Ah, sir, if you will look at this web on the grass, you will see that as fast as ever I put the water on it, the sun dries it all up, and yet, sir, I see it gets whiter and whiter."

An amiable rustic once heard Mr. Emerson lecture, but could make nothing of it. Turning to a friend he said, "Bother it! I'd like to know what Emerson thinks about God. I bet I'll ask him." He did so, when Mr. Emerson came down the aisle. "God," replied the lecturer, "is as the x of Algebra, that is, the unknown quantity in every problem."

A lady going to a photographer to have her likeness taken, made the special stipulation that every justice should be done to her looks. "Every justice," replied the artist; "you mean, madam, every mercy."

When Mr. Wilberforce was a candidate for Hull, his sister, an amiable and witty young lady, offered the compliment of a new gown to each of the wives of those freemen who voted for her brother, on which she was saluted with a cry of: "Miss Wilberforce for ever," whereupon she pleasantly observed, "I thank

you, gentlemen, but I cannot agree with you, for really I do not wish to be Miss Wilberforce for ever!"¹

The hostess at an evening party arranged that her guests should sit round the drawing-room, and she would give a prize to the one who would make the funniest face. At a given word she glanced round and noticed an old lady in the corner and on inspection said she had won the prize. The old lady most indignantly replied that she had purposely got out of the circle and was not playing.

Dr. Potter, Bishop of New York, was once asked by a lady why, in the many pictures and statues of angels exhibited, the angels are always depicted either as women or young men without beards or moustaches. The bishop's answer contained one of the prettiest compliments ever paid to the fair sex. He said: "Everyone knows that women naturally inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, but the men only *get in* by a very close shave."

Charming young lady: "The worst of me is that I am so apt to be run away with by an inference."

Young curate: "Oh, how I wish I were an inference!"

Sir J. Barrington, in his *Personal Sketches*, says one of the prettiest similes in the world is to be found in Sir John Suckling's *The Wedding*, 1648—

"Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light."

¹ *Wit and Humour.*

An Oxford senior classic, living at the end of the eighteenth century, twitted a Cambridge wrangler on his dry mathematical taste by sending him the following lines which he had composed for his benefit:—

“Let mathematicians and geometricians
Talk of circles’ and triangles’ charms,
The figure I prize is a girl with bright eyes,
And the circle that’s formed by her arms.”

CHAPTER XII

WIT ON SOLEMN OCCASIONS

I REMEMBER so well during my curate days at Harrogate calling upon a dear old woman to whom had fallen the mournful duty of attending the funeral of a neighbour. She described the sad event in the following words: "Ah, we did put her away comfortably yesterday; and it was a lovely funeral! We had tea and cake before going to the church, and cake and tea after we returned to the house."

I was an eye witness of an amusing incident at — Church Congress which showed how the sublime and ridiculous sometimes meet. At one of the stalls of the Art Exhibition the Burial Reform Association had on view a number of miniature coffins, some made of wicker-work, and others of papier-maché; whilst, on the adjoining stall, there was displayed a large assortment of tracts with a neatly illuminated card bearing the words, "Please take one." The thought flashed across the mind of a member of Congress to seize an opportunity, when no one was looking, to take this card and place it among the miniature advertisement coffins. Shortly after, an official of the Burial Reform Association, was greatly gratified by the keen interest

of the visitors round his stall, but he became somewhat crestfallen as he saw his coffins rapidly disappearing, and realised the trick that had been played upon him.

A wag was in the habit of calling the birth, marriage, and death column of the newspaper the hatches, patches, and dispatches.

A vicar, on meeting a boy who had just lost his father, said that he was going to preach a funeral sermon next Sunday, and was about to call at his mother's to learn what were his dear father's last words. To which the boy replied, "Father had no last word, mother had it."

A member of a city council questioned the advisability of carrying out a proposal that £30 be spent on advertising the city cemetery. The chairman of the committee said he could best reply in the words of an American: "A good business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark."

At my ordination I was titled to the Parish Church of Harrogate. Soon after I had entered upon the curacy my vicar told me that he would be away for a few days, and that during his absence I should be called upon to officiate for the first time at a wedding, remarking that he had received from the Registrar-General a request that the proper age of the contracting parties and not "full age" should be entered in the register, and I was to be very particular to

have such an entry made. The happy day arrived, and the bride and bridegroom turned out to be elderly Yorkshire people. After the ceremony, on adjourning to the vestry, I asked the man his age, and without any ado he replied, I think, "Sixty-five." I then turned to the lady, and she said, "full age," on which I explained I could only enter the proper age. "I am going to exact my rights," she exclaimed; "it is not the first time, young man, I have been married." Then I said, "I must put some age, and therefore will enter sixty-five, the same as your husband." "Indeed you will not!" she indignantly said. The better three-quarters now blurted out, "Why don't you tell the gent your age? You are ——" "Where did you get that from?" "From your family Bible." "What right had you to look into my private affairs?" she angrily retorted. And thus the first cloud gathered over their sky on that bright spring morning.

As an example of sanctified common sense being lamentably lacking, a country barber, on being deeply impressed at a revival meeting, was urged by the missionary to make it a rule of his life always to give a word in season to his customers. Next morning, on opening his saloon, a man who was known to be a terror in the neighbourhood, entered, and asked for a shave. The barber having stropped his razor, and applied the lather, held his customer by the nose, and began operations under his chin. Just then he remembered his promise of the previous night, and

pausing for a moment, but without relaxing his hold, solemnly inquired: "Friend, are you prepared to die?" "No! indeed I am not!" exclaimed the poor half-shaven man. Then shaking off the barber, he bolted out of the shop to carry his custom elsewhere.

CHAPTER XIII

RIDDLES

BISHOP SAMUEL WILBERFORCE abounded in riddles and playful jests. Here is a question he once asked of the then Archdeacon of Oxford. "Why is an archdeacon's apron like unwholesome food?" The good man replied, thoughtfully, that he did not know. "Because," said the bishop, "*it goes against his stomach.*"

"Who has been the greatest financier in the world's history?"

"Noah, because he successfully floated a limited company, whilst the rest of the world was in liquidation."

"What is the first banking transaction mentioned in the history of the world?"

"When Pharaoh received a check at the bank of the Red Sea, which had been crossed by Moses and Company."

These lines are copied from an old book :

"Written on a looking-glass—

'I change, and so do women too;
But I reflect—*that* women never do.'

"Answered by a lady—

'If women reflected, O scribbler! declare,
What man, faithless man, would be blessed by thy fair!'"

Archbishop Whateley once asked a friend the difference between a looking-glass and a lady? "It consists in the one reflecting without speaking, and the other speaking without reflecting."

Another of Whateley's questions was: "If the devil lost his tail, where should he go to find a new one?" And without giving time for an answer, he himself replied: "To the gin-palace, for bad spirits are retailed there."

I am indebted to the *Strand Magazine* for permission to include the following:—

"Mr. Churchill is credited with the conundrum: 'What is the difference between a candidate and an M.P. ?'

'One stands for a place and the other sits for it.'"

CHAPTER XIV

WHERE WIT IS BAFFLED

THE following experience is given in the life of Dr. Moberly, Bishop of Salisbury, shortly after his consecration in 1869. His daughter relates (*Dulce Domum*, p. 224):—

“We have made the acquaintance of Ethel Hamilton, the late bishop’s eldest daughter. She came to call on us. She asked me eagerly where was the eighth sister who had been with us in the cathedral the Sunday we were all together. I inquired laughingly whether seven sisters were not enough, and, on her persisting that there had been eight, I asked for a description of the person she had seen. She gave it me very carefully, and I said, ‘You have described my sister Mary, who died ten years ago.’ The subject dropped immediately, and we have not referred to it since.

“Many years later I told my mother of this conversation. Hearing that I had never shown Ethel Hamilton any picture of Mary, she begged me to do so. That evening I went to see the Hamiltons. They said: ‘What have you got there?’ Putting an old coloured daguerreotype of Mary into Ethel’s hands, I answered, ‘It is the likeness of some one you have never seen.’

As she looked at it, her face flushed up to her hair, and she said: 'It is the sister who was with you in the cathedral the first Christmas you were here. I recognise her perfectly.' Ethel then told her story. How she had curiously looked towards the family that were to occupy her old home and place. 'She lifted her head and gave us a steady look, and, more than once, counted *eight sisters in bonnets just alike*. Her eye fell especially on this sister, and she said to herself that is a pretty face, with a sweet upward look. I will make a friend of her.' She saw this sister again, standing with us in a group at the altar rail, and noticed her with pleasure. Afterwards, when Ethel was introduced to one and another, she looked in vain for this sister, and at last asked about her. Of course I wanted to hear more, and asked many questions, and Ethel exclaimed: 'How I wish you had questioned me about it before, when it was all fresh, and I could have told you so much; now it is so long ago.'

"Ethel Hamilton was our dear friend through our whole time at Salisbury. If anything, she was lacking in imagination: her honesty, downrightness, and accuracy of mind and word were so great, that we used to tell her that her efforts to avoid the smallest exaggeration made her letters quite prosy. She died in 1895."

"Mr. Ruskin once told Mr. Spurgeon a very remarkable story, for the truth of which he himself could answer. Mr. Ruskin related it with an impassioned tenderness and power. 'A Christian gentleman, a widower, with

several little ones, was in a treaty for the occupancy of an old farmhouse in the country. One day he took them to see their new residence. While he talked with the landlord, the young people set off on a tour of inspection and scampered here, there, and everywhere. Presently when they seemed to have exhausted the lower and upper rooms, one of them suggested that the underground premises should receive a visit, so the merry band went helter-skelter in search of a way below, found a door at the head of some dark stairs, and were rushing down them at great speed, when, midway, they suddenly stopped in startled amazement, for, standing at the bottom of the steps, they saw their mother, with outstretched arms and loving gestures, waving them back, and silently forbidding their further passage. With a cry of mingled fear and joy, they turned, and fled in haste to their father, telling him that they had seen 'Mother,' that she had smiled lovingly at them, but had eagerly motioned them to go back. Search was made, and, close to the foot of those narrow, gloomy stairs, they found a deep and open well, into which, in their mad rush, every child must inevitably have fallen and perished, had not the Lord in His mercy interposed. Mr. Spurgeon on being asked to give his theory of the nature of the appearance, replied that he could not explain it, but he thought that God had impressed on the retina of the children's eyes an object which would naturally cause them to return at once to their father, thus ensuring their safety.'"¹

¹ C. H. Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, vol. ii.

Bishop King of Lincoln used to tell this remarkable experience. In his curate days he was sent for to visit a man about a mile and a half away, who was said to be dying. The night was dark and the road lonely, but the young curate trudged on, only to find when he reached the house that there was no one ill at all, and he returned home puzzled and perplexed. Years passed and the incident faded from his memory. When he was a bishop, he visited a man in prison under sentence of death, and to his great surprise the criminal asked him if he remembered this incident. "It was I," said the man, "who gave the false message; I wanted to lure you out that I might rob you on the lonely road." "Why didn't you attack me, then?" asked the bishop. The reply was extraordinary, "I hadn't the pluck. I lay in hiding, as I had determined to attack you on your way back, but when you came near, I saw you were not alone."

"But I was alone," persisted the bishop. "No, you were not," retorted the man; "there was a mysterious-looking stranger walking close behind you; and he followed you to your house and then disappeared. My chance was gone, and I experienced a sensation I never felt before." Can it be, it is asked, that, in the dark night, the angel of the Lord stood by him and made the fact known?

CHAPTER XV

OMNIUM GATHERUM

"How can I, Pult'ney Chesterfield, forget
While Roman spirit charms, and Attic wit?"¹

GOD has endowed man with a sense of humour, and He intends him to use his risible faculties. Laughter is a God-given gift. A merry heart and a smiling face are assets in the greatest life. Wit, taste, perfume bestow a fragrance on life. The boy-heart in a man is as necessary as the spirit of frolic in kittens, puppies, and all young life, and is a sign of good health. Even a Scot cannot read without a healthy smile Tertullian's narrative of how Licinius Crassus laughed himself to death whilst witnessing an ass trying to swallow some thistles. Lord Chesterfield once remarked that "man was the only creature endowed with the power of laughter: and, you may add, perhaps, that he is the only creature that deserves to be laughed at."

The holiest and the cleverest of men need moments of relaxation. Archdeacon Paley was playing at leap-frog one day with his pupils, when a visitor was announced. "Now, boys," exclaimed the great theologian, "we must be grave; here comes a fool!" Pitt, while conversing with a friend, saw a certain man

¹ Pope, *Epilogue to the Satires*, Dial. ii. 84-85.

approaching, and said, "Let us get out of that fellow's way; he is such a bore." Replied his friend: "I am surprised you should think him so: to me he always seems to talk sense." Which made Pitt exclaim, "Sense! any fool can talk sense! Give me the man who can talk nonsense."

Humour fulfils an important part in smoothing over even the high affairs of State.

Canon Teignmouth Shore, in his charming volume entitled *Some Recollections*, mentions that no ambassador stood so high in Bismarck's estimation as Lord Ampthill. Whenever there was a "row" among the Corps Diplomatique, Bismarck used to send for him to give advice and put matters straight. "The way Ampthill managed it was this," said Baron von Ompteda, "when Bismarck flew into a rage and grew furious over anything, Ampthill would say something amusing. . . . Then Bismarck would laugh, and once he laughed, it was all right."

Our national institution, *Punch*, by provoking smiles over the humorous side of things, goes largely to make our work-a-day life the brighter and happier, as well as raising wit to its lawful and lofty position in the society of gentlemen. We have read this story of General Grant. An officer came into his tent where others were assembled one day, brimming over with a good story which he was eager to tell. He prefaced it by saying: "I hope there are no ladies here," and General Grant replied, "No, but there are *gentlemen* here."

We do not agree with Hodge, the hedger and ditcher, who remarked to a Christian man with whom he was talking, "I loikes Sunday, I does: I loikes Sunday." "And what makes you like Sunday?" "'Cause, you see, it's a day of rest. I goes to the old church, I gets into a pew, and puts my legs up, and I thinks o' nothin'." ¹

Lord Althorp, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, having proposed to the House of Commons a vote of £400 a year for the salary of the Archdeaconry of Bengal, was puzzled by a question from Mr. Hume, "What are the duties of an archdeacon?" So he sent to the Lords a messenger to obtain an answer. The Upper House first inquired of Archbishop Harcourt, who described an archdeacon as "aide-de-camp to the bishop"; then of Bishop Copleston, who said, "the archdeacon is *oculus episcopi*." The chancellor, however, declared that neither of these explanations would satisfy the House. "Go," he said, "and ask the Bishop of London." To Dr. Blomfield accordingly the messenger went, and repeated the question, "What is an archdeacon?" "An archdeacon," replied the bishop, "is an ecclesiastical officer who performs archidiaconal functions," and with this reply Lord Althorp was perfectly satisfied.

An American boy went into a shop and asked for a bun. The girl handed one to him, and he said he had changed his mind and would rather have a glass of lemonade.

¹ C. H. Spurgeon.

This was given to him, and he drank it, and was going out of the shop without paying, when the girl called out, "Hi, hi, little boy, you haven't paid for that lemonade." "Well," said the boy, "I gave you the bun for it." "But you didn't pay for the bun." "Well, I didn't eat it, did I?" said the boy, and left the shop before the astonished girl could figure it out.¹

A poor boy, on being asked by a good lady what his father was, said: "My father is a Christian, but he has not been doing much at it lately."

The celebrated Father Stanton of St. Alban's, Holborn, was keenly humorous. Once when a parishioner asked whether it was quite wise to use incense and processional lights at St. Alban's, the Father replied: "There are only two classes of people who are emphatically termed 'wise' in the New Testament—the 'wise men' who offered incense, and the 'wise virgins' who carried processional lights."

A visitor to St. Alban's once confessed that he liked the service, but objected to the "stink of the incense." Whereupon Father Stanton gravely said: "I am very sorry, my friend." "Why?" asked the stranger. "Well, you see, there are only two stinks in the next world—incense and brimstone—and you will have to choose between them," was the reply.

Now let us give a Roland for an Oliver. "Why are ritualists the most irritating of human beings?" "Because they are always crossing themselves and incensing others."

¹ *May I Tell You a Story*, by Helen Mar.

There are many advantages in variety of condition, one of which is pointed out by a divine who rejoices that between two classes of people "all the holidays of the church are kept, since the rich observe the feasts, and the poor observe the fasts."

A vicar, recently inducted to a Berkshire living, was surprised soon after his arrival in the parish at receiving a visit from the verger, who, with evident concern, said, "Sir, do you know that the man you have your milk from is a nonconformist?" "No," replied the reverend gentleman, "I was certainly not aware of that, John; but, really, I don't think it matters much so long as the cows are not nonconformists. If you find that they are, you might let me know, and I will then consider the advisability of changing the milkman."

A parish clerk was assisting a clergyman to robe before the service commenced, and said to him, "Please, sir, I am deaf." "Indeed, my good man," says the curate, "then how do you manage to follow me during the service?" "Why, sir," says the clerk, "I look up, and when you shuts your mouth, I opens mine."

A century ago the vicar of a fat South London living was in great financial difficulty, and could only retain his benefice by never allowing himself to be taken up for debt. The practice to which he resorted for many years to escape the arm of the law and to satisfy the requirements of the bishop was to reside at Calais, and arrange to arrive at Dover just about 12.15 A.M.

every Sunday, so as to get up to town and take all his duty, leaving Dover on his return journey a few minutes before midnight.

Mr. Gladstone and Dean Wellesley were school-fellows at Eton, and the friendship there commenced continued throughout life. When they were both in the sixties, they met at a little dinner at the Deanery of Windsor, and the great statesman jocularly said across the table to the dean, "I say, old friend, I have got a good story for you about Harry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter." Upon which Mrs. Gladstone hastily interfered, "William, you must not tell that story until the servants have left the room." When the psychological moment arrived, the premier said: "You know, Wellesley, that Bishop Phillpotts during his old age acquired the habit of sitting up late at night with his chaplain. Well, one night he was comfortably ensconced in his study chair with feet against the mantelpiece, dreamily looking into the fire, when he heard footsteps at the door, and the noise of a dress behind him. Without looking up, he said in a very endearing voice (thinking the intruder to be his wife), 'What can I do for you, my little darling?' To his great astonishment, the trespasser proved to be—not his wife—but his wife's maid. And the only way in which the poor bishop could give expression to his feelings was by a long drawn-out subdued whistle." Mr. Gladstone, at this juncture, said: "I cannot manage the whistle, so I will ask Catherine to give it," and Mrs. Gladstone finished the story by giving the

long drawn-out whistle to the delight not only of the dean but also of all the guests.

Let a man distinctly understand that he is the head of the house and family, and then when he agrees that the wife is the neck, or immediately below the head, it may dawn upon him that the neck often turns the head.

"The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam ; not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved. Man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double-refined, one remove further from the earth."¹

The following lines are from a boy's essay on Man :—

"Man was made before woman. When God looked at Adam, He said to Himself: "Well, I think I can do better if I try again. And He made Eve. . . . On the seventh day He rested—woman was made, and she has never rested since."

"We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow,
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so."²

The following scene took place in the Irish House of Commons: "What, Mr. Speaker!" said Sir Boyle Roche, "and so we are to beggar ourselves for fear of vexing posterity! Now I would ask the honourable gentleman, and this *still more* honourable House, why we should put ourselves out of our way to do anything for posterity? for what has posterity done for us?"

¹ Matthew Henry.

² Pope.

Sir Boyle, hearing the roar of laughter which, of course, followed this sensible blunder, but not being conscious that he had said anything out of the way, was rather puzzled, and conceived that the House had misunderstood him. He, therefore, began to explain. He assured the House "that by *posterity* he did not mean our *ancestors*, but those who were to come immediately after *them*." ¹

Lord Palmerston's good humour, as a prominent element in his character, is well known; we find it even during his last illness, when his physician was forced to mention death. "Die, my dear doctor!" he exclaimed. "That's the last thing I shall do!" ²

Curran's ruling passion was his love of a joke. In his last illness, his physician, observing in the morning that he seemed to cough with more difficulty, he answered, "That is rather surprising, as I have been practising all night."

In the Crown Court a juryman, on the oath being administered, addressing the clerk, said: "Speak up, please, I cannot hear what you say." Baron Alderson: "Stop; are you deaf?" Juror: "Yes, of one ear." The learned judge: "Then you had better leave that box, for it is necessary that jurymen should hear both sides."

The Duchess of Newcastle, who wrote plays and romances in King Charles the Second's time, asked Bishop Wilkins how she could get up to the moon; for

¹ Sir J. Barrington's *Personal Sketches*.

² *Everybody's Book of English Wit*.

as the journey must needs be very long there would be no possibilities of going through it without resting on the way! "Oh, madam," said the bishop, "your grace has built so many castles in the air that you cannot want a place to bask in."¹

Sydney Smith, on seeing a child stroking a tortoise; "This," he said, "is like scratching the dome of St. Paul's to please the dean and chapter."

On Lord Lauderdale telling Sheridan that he had heard an excellent joke which he would repeat, Sheridan stopped him, saying, "Pray, don't, my dear Lauderdale; in your mouth a joke is no laughing matter."

An American poet, whose pegasus had stepped upon his foot, said, "What a pity it is my grandfather left to me his gout, and nothing in the cellar to keep it up with."

A miser did not openly declare during his lifetime to which of his two nephews he would leave his fortune. When the will came to be read, it appeared that the younger had been preferred. The legatee, on being asked to give a reason why he had been selected, replied that his uncle had once said to him, "It may be a mere fancy of mine, but I don't quite like the idea of finding myself penniless in the other world. I will leave you my fortune if you will pledge your honour to place £10,000 in my coffin!" On hearing the explanation, the elder brother asked, "And were you such a fool as to consent?" "Yes," was the reply, "and I've been as good as my word. I wrote a cheque

¹ Miller, 1739.

for £10,000 to my uncle, *made payable to order*, and its put in the coffin.”¹

Viscount Ridley told a good story at the festival dinner of the Charing Cross Hospital, during the summer of 1909. “I have heard of a child in an elementary school,” he said, “who, being asked to define the sentence in the Creed ‘the quick and dead,’ answered that the quick were those who got out of the way of motor-cars, and the dead were those who didn’t.” •

R.S.V.P. has been translated: *Refusez si vous pouvez*.

“The whole of my life” (said Sydney Smith to a friend) “has been passed like a razor in hot water or a scrape.”

The following incident I was told by one of the chief actors: “At a City Council, a member made the following peroration to a most eloquent speech: ‘My Lord Mayor, I say it is a nucleus and nothing but a nucleus.’ (A voice from behind, ‘Good word; give it him again.’) ‘My Lord Mayor, I repeat a nucleus: and upon my nucleus I resume my seat!’”

Dean Pigou, in one of his delightful books, says: “I heard a delicious story of a member of the Senior United Club calling at a house in Belgravia to inquire after a lady who had lately been confined. It was of importance that a son and heir should be born because of the family estates. Knocking at the door, Jeames Plush appeared. ‘How is her ladyship?’ ‘As well

¹ *Old and Odd Memories*, by the Hon. L. A. Tollemache, published by Messrs. Edward Arnold. (By permission.)

as can be expected, sir.' 'Is it a boy?' 'No, sir.' 'Oh, I am sorry. Is it a girl, then?' 'No, sir.' 'Bless my heart! If it is not a boy or a girl, what on earth is it?' Pulling himself together, with great dignity, Jeames Plush replied: 'Her ladyship, sir, has given borth to a hare (heir), and the family is very pleased.'"

It is sometimes difficult for even good men to see eye to eye, and to agree on all minor points. On one occasion, in the dim and distant past, an old Chronicler records that a rector and his curate fell out by the way, and on the latter having arranged to enter upon pastures new, a parishioner who understood the younger shepherd as much as he misunderstood the older one, suggested that the text for the farewell sermon should be taken from Genesis xxii. 5: "Abide ye here with the ass, and I . . . will go yonder and worship."

A near relative of mine, when a boy just home from Rugby for the Christmas holiday, had been presented by his father with a pair of acme skates. Seizing the opportunity to try them, he went to a pond situated in a secluded part of a field near his father's house. The first attempt to skate was accompanied by a fall which caused a voice from behind a hedge to exclaim: "Hey, mon, you ain't got them 'ere skates on reight." The second attempt was followed by a like fall, which drew forth the same words from the unknown voice. The third attempt brought him again a sprawler, and the same voice repeated the same words, which made the crestfallen public schoolboy carefully examine his

boots and skates, and interrogate, "What is wrong with them?" To which the gruff northerner suggested, "Why, mon, thee ought to have them skates on thy back rather than on thy feet, for thou art oftener on thy back than thy feet."

Lord Holland said of one who was coming to visit him, and who was suspected of waiting for dead men's shoes: "If I'm alive, I'll be glad to see him: if I am dead, he'll be glad to see me."

A stranger, asking a rich man for the loan of five guineas, was met with the rebuke: "I am surprised that you should apply to me for such a favour, seeing I do not know you." "Oh," replied the man, "it is for that very reason I came to you, for those who do know me would not lend me a farthing."¹

Gratitude is sometimes described as a sense of favours to come.

A professor was showing some performing fleas in an Austrian drawing-room, and by some misadventure one of the tiny insects jumped upon a spectator, who happened to be a very dignified princess. The professor was in a terrible state of perturbation, for, as he explained, the lost performer was his cleverest acrobat, which he had had for years. In short, his living was bound up with it! After many apologies, he crept slowly up to H.R.H., and addressing her, with outstretched arm, said: "Ah! don't move! There he is!" Then, putting out his thumb and first finger, he prepared to tenderly capture the truant. But, alas!

¹ Miller, 1780.

on examining it, with tears in his eyes he exclaimed :
"Madam, this is not *my* flea."

It has been remarked that England has no climate, only weather.

"I cannot conceive how Jonah could live in the stomach of a whale."

"Oh, that's nothing! I saw Bishop So-and-So to-day coming out of a fly."

A Bishop of Sodor and Man was once announced by a deaf or stupid servant as "a bishop sort of man." Another, or the same bishop, of that oddly named diocese, being on the continent, was described in the visitors' list as "L'évêque de syphon et d'homme."¹

The following is a saying of Sir Walter Scott: "I feel now as strong as Ailsa Craig, now as feeble as the wave that breaks upon it."

Some orator in the House of Lords said once: "This occasion is the proudest moment in my life." The late Duke of Devonshire murmured to his neighbour, "The proudest moment in my life was when my pig won the first prize at Skipton Fair."

One day Mr. Curran said to Father O'Leary, the well-known Roman Catholic priest, "Reverend Father, I wish that you were St. Peter." "And why would you wish that I was St. Peter?" said O'Leary, "Because, Reverend Father, in that case you would have the keys of heaven, and you could let me in."

¹ *Old and Odd Memories*, by the Hon. L. A. Tollemache, published by Messrs. Edward Arnold. (By permission.)

"By my honour and conscience," replied the priest, "it would be better for you that I had the keys of the other place; for then I could let you out."¹

At a supper once given at the Lyceum it devolved upon J. L. Toole to propose the health of Sir Henry Irving. The speaker mentioned that he had recently had a dream in which he fancied himself standing at heaven's gate. On his applying for admission, St. Peter denied it him on account of his being an actor. While he was retracing his steps, who should come up but his old friend, Henry Irving, who was immediately admitted. This emboldened the rejected one to ask St. Peter why Henry Irving should be treated with such favour; it was most unjust that he should be preferred before his brother actor. The janitor replied: "Surely, you don't call Henry Irving an actor?"

It has often been said that absence of body in time of danger is better than presence of mind. But here is a modern rendering. A young Japanese, studying English, wished to turn into his mother-tongue the expression, "Out of sight, out of mind," and, on referring to the English Dictionary, evolved a translation which, being construed back into English, read thus, "The invisible is insane!"

"Papa," said young Tommy, "does the world go round?" His father: "It does at present, my son, but it wouldn't if it were divided among all the people who want it."

¹ Date 1825.

Thurlow's answer to some one complaining of the injustice of a Limited Company: "Why, you never expected justice from a Limited Company, did you? They have neither a soul to lose or a body to save."

A clergyman was accosted by a doctor, a professed deist, who asked him if he followed preaching to save souls? "Yes." "Had he ever seen a soul?" "No." "Had he ever heard a soul?" "No." "Had he ever tasted a soul?" "No." "Had he ever smelt a soul?" "No." "Had he ever felt a soul?" "Yes." "Well," said the doctor, "there are four of the five senses against one upon the question whether there be a soul." The clergyman then asked his opponent if he were a doctor of medicine? "Yes." "If he ever heard a pain?" "No." "If he ever saw a pain?" "No." "If he ever tasted a pain?" "No." "If he ever smelt a pain?" "No." "If he ever felt a pain?" "Yes." "Well, then," said the clergyman, "there are also four senses against one upon the question whether there be a pain; and yet, sir, you know that there is a pain, and I know that there is a soul."

Dean Stanley used often to stay with A. K. H. B. The writing-pad on the study table was of white blotting paper, but had an outer skin of cartridge paper. Regularly, as the dean wrote, he turned his letter over, and sought to dry the ink on the cartridge paper. "Some human beings," says A. K. H. B., "are very lacking in resources. But, after awhile, the thought suggested itself to both of us at once to

make the pad exclusively of blotting paper. The dean was a very great man; but so was Sir Isaac Newton; and you remember how he cut in his study door a large hole for his cat, and a small one for the kitten.”¹

It is related of one of the American millionaires that on being asked how he became possessed of so much capital, he said: “When I was a young boy my father died leaving my mother penniless, and being at my wits’ end how to help her, the thought struck me that I should go to a neighbour and ask him to lend me a dozen eggs, which I would repay directly I earned some money. I then went to another neighbour, and there obtained the loan of a hen that was wanting to sit. After due course, the old hen, as well as twelve eggs having been returned, I became in time the sole possessor of a poultry farm, and my capital went on increasing until my dollars could be counted by the million.”

An elephant, on taking a walk round his domain, chanced to come across a nest with eggs in it. The heavy animal, being a kindly good-natured soul, said to himself, “This is the nest of that old bird who did me a friendly turn not long ago. Evidently, she has been called away on urgent business. As one good deed deserves another I will take her place during her absence.” The result of the well-intentioned action, and the feelings of the mother-bird on her return, are better imagined than described. A sad example of misplaced kindness!

¹ *Twenty Years at St. Andrews.*

On one occasion when King Edward VII. was showing a leading politician over his model working-men's club on the Sandringham estate, the member of parliament took special notice of the solidity of the chairs. His Majesty replied : " Yes, they are firm seats. Many an M.P. wishes his seat were equally safe."

An old Scotch couple once started quarrelling. The good wife remarked, with an effort at conciliation : " Look at that dog and cat on the hearth sitting side by side so quiet and peaceable." " Aye !" grunted the husband, " but tie them together and see what they will do."

Lord Wriothlesley Russell, who was Canon of Windsor, used to conduct a mission-service for the household troops quartered there ; and one of his converts, a stalwart trooper of the Blues, expressing his gratitude for these voluntary ministrations, and contrasting them with the officer-like and disciplinary methods of the army chaplains, genially exclaimed, " But I always say there's not a bit of the gentleman about you, my lord." ¹

The following advertisement, which appeared in the *Reading Mercury*, in the year 1726, shows that the qualifications required of a curate have somewhat changed:—

" A curate wanted, who will have easy duty and a stipend of £50 per annum, besides valuable perquisites. He must be zealously affected to the present Government, and never forsake his principles, singular in his morals, sober and abstemious, grave in his dress and

¹ *Collections and Recollections.*

deportment, choice in his company, and exemplary in his conversation. He must be of superior abilities, studious and careful in his employment of time, a lover of fiddling, but no dancer."

Here is another which appeared in the *Public Advertiser* of 1776: "Wanted for a family who have bad health, a sober, steady person in the capacity of doctor, surgeon, and apothecary. He must occasionally act in the capacity of butler, and dress hair and wigs. He will be required to read prayers occasionally and to preach a sermon every Sunday. The reason for this advertisement is that the family cannot any longer afford the expense of the physical tribe, and wish to be at a certain expense for their bodies and souls. A good salary will be given."

Turner, the painter, was often most reluctant to part with his masterpieces. Once a very rich man introduced himself as one desirous of purchasing a picture. "Don't want to sell," was the painter's reply. The man of wealth then drew from his pocket a bundle of banknotes, to the tune of £5000. "Mere paper," observed Turner, with grim humour.

"To be bartered for *mere* canvas," replied the would-be customer, waving his hand at the "Building of Carthage."

A labourer one evening called at the registrar's office to register his father's death. When the official asked the date of the event, the son replied, "He ain't dead yet, but he'll be dead before morning, so I thought it

would save me another journey if you would put it down now."

"Oh, that won't do at all," said the registrar, "perhaps your father will live several days."

"Well, I don't know, sir; the doctor says as he won't, *and he knows what he has given him.*"

CHAPTER XVI

EPILOGUE

"A GOOD play needs no epilogue," says Shakespeare. "Yet good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues." Wit and her sister Wisdom are derived from Weissen, which signifies knowledge, but the meaning has so extended as to embrace that mental faculty by which knowledge and truth are perceived. The meeting of wise men, the parliament of England in Anglo-Saxon times, known as the Witenagemot has its roots in the same word.

Rahere combined the meaning of the two words in his life, being the wit of the court of Henry I., and also the founder of St. Bartholomew's Church and Hospital. Hogarth, in one of his suggestive pictures, paints Rahere asleep, dreaming of the Church and Hospital: in another, he portrays the realisation of the dream, the laying the foundation of that beneficent institution which has done so much during the centuries to mitigate suffering.

Yet another may be mentioned, Yorick, of infinite jest, whose wit is of such a nature as to provoke reflections similar to those expressed by Solomon in the words: "There is a time to every purpose . . . a time to laugh . . . and a time to die."

One day, in pleasant banter, a king gave his jester a favourite walking-stick, which he was wont to carry, saying: "Take this, my gift to you, and do not part with it, unless perchance you find a greater fool than yourself! Then give it him!" The fool took the stick, and thanked the giver. "Some day," he thought, "I may turn this to good account." Then, for a time, the incident appeared forgotten. Years passed, and the king's health began to fail: he grew sad and despondent. One day he called the jester to him and said: "Alas! poor fool, I shall never laugh at your kindly wit again. I am about to take a long journey to an unknown country." "And does my lord know anyone who has visited that far-off land?" "No, for the travellers I have seen set sail for its shores have never come back from thence." "How long will you be away, sire—a week?" "More than that!" "A month then?" "Nay, more than a month!" "Ah! a year, perchance?" "More than a year! I shall never return, my friend." "And what preparation," asked the jester anxiously, "has my royal master made for this journey to a country from whose bourne no traveller returns?" "None whatever!" answered the king sadly. "NONE!" exclaimed the jester. "Then take back the stick you gave me! See! here it is! For indeed I have at last met a greater fool than myself! Even I—with all my folly—would not undertake a journey to so far-off a land without making such preparations as would ensure my safe arrival and a goodly welcome!"

Should any reader who has derived pleasure from these pages know "a good story," which he is unable to find in them, the compiler will be glad if he will kindly send it to him, and it shall be inserted, if suitable, in the next edition, the name of the sender being given. And now for the present:

FAREWELL!

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